Johnstone High School 

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July 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

**NEW SESSION 2021/22**

It is a pleasure to be writing to you with information about new session 2021/22. All the staff here at Johnstone High School are very much looking forward to welcoming your child/children when term starts on August 16th 2021.

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| **At time of writing, the Scottish Government has not yet published covid guidance for schools for the new school session. Therefore, this letter will cover the practicalities around the return to school, and I will write to you again just before the children return on the 16th with the updated health and safety measures.****Before the start of term we will also send S2-6 parents/carers the ‘parent pack’ of new term information via email. If you would prefer a paper pack, please call the office. If you have changed your email address, also please call the office.****S1 parents/carers will be getting the new term information via a paper pack that will be given your child on 16th August. We hope to get your email addresses as soon as possible thereafter, in order to switch you over to electronic communication.** |

My hope for all our pupils is they have a successful and happy school career, getting the most out of all aspects of school life. I believe young people are most likely to do well at school if there is a strong partnership between ourselves and your family. To this end, I would welcome parent/carer support across a range of areas.

**High Expectations**

We always emphasise high, but realistic expectations for all pupils in Johnstone High School and we would welcome parent/carer reinforcement of these. Our school values underpin these high expectations:

* Determination
* Friendship
* Honesty
* Respect
* Responsibility
* Trust

**Positive Behaviour**

We are committed to supporting all our young people to demonstrate the school values in everything they do, including their behaviour and conduct in school and in the local community. We firmly believe that positive, respectful relationships are at the heart of good behaviour, and to the end we have been moved away from a traditional discipline/behaviour policy to a ‘relationships policy’. At the heart of this is a commitment to support our young people to be ‘safe, ready and respectful’.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact with your child’s pastoral teacher (their details are towards the end of the letter).

**School uniform**

At Johnstone High School we are an inclusive community where everyone belongs. A key factor in building a strong school community identity is the wearing of school uniform.

**Our school uniform consists of:**

* School Blazer
* Black trousers (plain formal trousers)
* Black skirt (appropriate length)
* White school shirt
* School tie
* Black jumper/cardigan
* Black shoes/trainers
* Warm/waterproof jacket is essential, especially as pupils will be encouraged to be outside at breaks and lunchtimes for fresh air

Clothing items that are **not** acceptable include:

* Leggings
* Jeans of any colour or denim jackets / items
* Inappropriately short skirts
* Hooded tops/zippers
* Football colours
* Oversized jewellery (health and safety)
* Coloured or white trainers (these are acceptable for PE only)

All outdoor jackets, hats, scarves and gloves should be removed in the class. Similarly, headphones/ear pods should not be worn in class. **Thank you for your continued support and encouragement of your child wearing their school uniform.** Please note that we will remind parents and pupils throughout the year about school uniform and when required we will issue pupils with items of uniform to wear.

Pupils should also be coming to school with a school bag containing a water bottle and a pencil case of basic stationary items. As promised during primary transition, S1 will be issued with stationary items and a scientific calculator when they arrive on the 16th.

**PE department**

Please note that PE uniform consists of:

* trainers (appropriate footwear avoids injury)
* one of:
Royal blue JHS PE T-shirt (synthetic sports top)
Royal blue JHS PE T-shirt (cotton)
Royal blue JHS PE Hoody
White t-shirt
* One of:
Navy blue or black shorts
Navy blue or black tracksuit bottoms
Navy blue or black sports leggings

To be able to take part in PE your child will be required to bring their PE kit on the days they get PE**.** Please refer to the PE Participation Guidelines which will be included in your information pack.

Renfrewshire Council has a policy which requires that all body piercings be removed before participation in PE. This policy exists to ensure the safety and well-being of your child as there have been some significant injuries recorded in the past. Some piercings require a longer period of time before they can be removed, but the shortest time needed is 6 weeks. This could mean your child missing an entire block of an activity (nearly 2 months) in PE, which is educationally undesirable. The school asks for your support in this area to help the PE department and your child get the most from their time in PE by considering the adverse effect that any piercing would have on your child's regular involvement/participation in PE.

**Attendance and punctuality**

Educational research shows a strong link between attainment and attendance. Therefore, where possible, only keep your child off school if it is absolutely necessary (covid related absence is, of course, necessary), and please try to avoid booking holidays during the session, especially to areas that are subject to quarantine on return**.** If we are concerned about your child’s attendance or punctuality, we will be in touch with you so we can work together to maximise their progress in school.

If your child is absent because of covid, either because they are self-isolating or have tested positive, **please notify us immediately** so we can take the appropriate measures at school level to keep everyone safe, thank you.

**Absence notes**

Please let the school know by letter or phone call if your child is likely to be absent for some time and give your child a note on their return to school, confirming the reason for absence. If there is no explanation from parents/carers, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

**SMS text messaging service**

When a pupil is marked absent and the school has received no prior explanation for the absence, parents/carers will be sent a text message. Parents/carers are then asked to contact the school to provide a reason for the absence.

**Late coming**

Pupils are frequently reminded of the importance of being on time for all classes. When a pupil is late for school they should come in through the main doors, hand sanitise, and report to the office for a ‘late slip’. Pupils late for school will only be allowed into class with a late slip so the class teacher doesn’t have to disrupt the lesson to amend the register.

Where a pupil is persistently late without suitable explanation, parents/carers will be contacted by Pastoral Support staff or Depute Head Teacher. If late coming continues beyond this stage, the DHT and Pupil Support teacher will work closely with the family to improve the situation. Pupils may be asked to catch up on lost learning by attending detention.

(Please note that pupils who are late because their school contracted bus is late will still require a late slip but there will, of course, be no further action taken.)

**S6 registration**

Where sixth year students have no classes at the start of the school day, they do not have to attend school for 8.50am. However, S6 students must sign the register at the school office by 9.40am at the latest. S6 also require to sign-out if they leave the school the day so that we have accurate records of who is in the building.

**Medical issues and health care**

Parents should notify the school of any medical requirements or allergies that their child may have. If medication is required it is better if this can be provided outside the school hours but, in cases where it is necessary during the child’s time in school, parents should contact the school to make appropriate arrangements. Staff are not obliged to give medicine to pupils. Other than inhalers and epi –pens, pupils should not routinely be carrying medication in school. The office staff will safely store medications for pupils and allow access as required throughout the day. Please contact the school for more information on this – please note that parents will be asked to complete a very short form clarifying dosage etc and giving the school permission to hold the medication. Similarly, please get in touch with us if your child has a medical condition that requires them to have a pass to access the toilet during lessons.

Minor accidents are dealt with by the school’s qualified first aiders. If a pupil takes ill or has an accident which requires that they be sent home or for treatment, the school will provide first aid and contact parents or carers. Therefore, **it is very important that the school has contact details for all parents or carers and an additional contact person in case parents or carers can’t be reached**. This information should be kept up to date. The school will not send younger pupils home from school unaccompanied. In the event of a serious illness or accident, a member of staff will accompany the child to a doctor or hospital and parents or carers will be notified immediately.

Finally, please help us by making sure we have all the information we require to support your child to the best of our ability. Please **ensure that the medical section in your child’s information pack is completed**, and during the course of the school year please get in touch if there are any issues we should know about – illnesses, injuries (particularly if these impact on mobility/ the ability to write), or any other matters that are impacting on your child’s health and wellbeing. All such matters will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

**Homework and Digital Access**

Homework can help bridge the gap between school and home and pupils should be receiving increasing amounts of homework as they progress through school towards their SQA qualifications. Our homework policy is available should any parent wish to see this.

Throughout the school closure, S1-2 classes had the option of using Satchel One, however the majority of classes (especially seniors) were supported through Microsoft teams. We will continue to embed both of these digital platforms to enhance our day-to-day classroom practice. It is also important to have these working well from August onwards should there be another school closure.

If there are any issues around access to digital devices or wifi, we will work hard to support families to make sure everyone has digital access should it be required. Therefore, **please complete the electronic survey which will be text out to you week beginning 16th August to you as this will allow us to identify who needs a loaned chromebook/ device** (thank you).

**Litter**

There is no excuse for litter not being disposed of appropriately. Parents are requested to encourage their child to dispose of litter correctly. This should apply in and out of school. Please encourage your children to look after our school and surrounding (residential) environment. Each year we receive a number of complaints from local residents, especially in Auchengreoch, about young people dropping litter, and this can cause some distress, particularly to older neighbours. Therefore, we actively encourage pupils to use bins within the school building and in the local community. We will continue to participate in community litter picking exercises throughout the session and there will be more information about this in your new session information pack.

**Road Safety and Parental Parking**

As you are aware, Beith Road is very busy and occasionally we see or hear reports of Johnstone High pupils taking risks when crossing the road or acting in an unsafe manner. We have involved the Community Police and the Community Safety Team to emphasise the importance of road safety with our pupils. I would appreciate you speaking to your child/children about this too.

I would also request your consideration when dropping your child/children off at school. For safety in the current climate, parents should park some distance from the school. As a result, there will be no parental car access up the hill at the start and end of the school day. Furthermore, the bus companies have requested that cars no longer park across from the bus bays. The buses are struggling to gain access and this can lead to congestion and potentially an accident.

**RESPECTFULLY, PARENTS ARE REQUESTED TO PARK/DROP OFF IN THE HUB CAR PARK, AND NOT THE BUS BAY / ROUNDABOUT AREAS.**

**Anti-Bullying**

Bullying is an unacceptable behaviour. We have a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of bullying. Crucially, however, the school can only act if they know that bullying is taking place. Parents and carers have a role to play in working with the school to tackle bullying behaviour. Bullying can cause stress and anxiety, which can affect a child’s health and attainment. If you are concerned about bullying, please contact the school (0300 300 1331) and ask for your child’s Pastoral Support teacher.

Crucially, the child should be reminded by both teachers and parents that it is not their fault, they are not to blame. Your support with actions suggested by the school is greatly appreciated to ensure a genuine partnership approach. Our ‘Respect For All’ policy can be sourced on the school website and was written in consultation with parents, pupils and staff.

**What can parents do if it involves texting or social media messaging?**

The increasing use mobile devices has opened up new areas for potential bullying – emails, chat rooms, web sites and the well-known instant messenger services. As a school, we teach pupils through our Personal and Social Education (PSE) programme about safe and responsible use of social media, alongside anti-bullying education in PSE and assembly inserts.

As cyber-bullying occurs at home and is out with the control of the school, parents should consider contacting the Police. However, there are a number of practical things parents can do to support their child (in addition to monitoring and supervising their use of technology):

- use the Report Abuse button (if available)

- stop the activity / delete the contact

- block the messages

- never reply

- complain to the service provider

- contact the mobile phone operator

- Keep messages / screen shots and contact the Police

Additional information is available from:

www.antibullying.net

www.betterbehaviourscotland.gov.uk

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

www.respectme.org.uk

**Child Protection**

Renfrewshire’s Child Protection Committee works to ensure that local agencies work together to protect children. It promotes the message that protection of children is a responsibility to be shared by all staff in partnership with the community. In line with Renfrewshire Council’s priorities, all staff in Johnstone High School have undergone Child Protection training. This will help to ensure that we can best support our young people. However it’s everyone’s job to make sure children in Renfrewshire are safe. If you have concerns about a child’s welfare or direct evidence/suspicion of a child being at risk, the only way you can protect the child is to report the concern.

1st Response Team - 0300 300 1199 choose option 1

Evenings/Weekends − 0800 811 505

Police Scotland − non emergency number dial 101

Child Protection Line − 0800 022 3222

In school, the Child Protection Co-ordinator is Mrs O’Malley, DHT.

**Parent Pay and Parent Portal**

Our school, along with many in Renfrewshire, is now ‘cashless’ and uses Parentpay to allow parents to pay online for school lunches, trips and other school events as they arise.

New S1 pupils should have Parentpay details sent through the post by headquarters. Please be reassured that no child will go without a school lunch if the system is not yet in place (pupils with free school meals will of course receive their free meal irrespective of this).

Renfrewshire Council has signed up for ‘Parent Portal’, this is a new online method for schools to communicate with parents. Parent Portal is an online service where you can access your child's school details, timetable, attendance records and school reports. and in the fullness of time as functionality is increased, parents/carers will also be able to report absences, sign permission slips and make payments to the school (it is linked to Parentpay).

Parent Portal works with MyAccount, the secure online account from mygov.scot. More than half the schools in Renfrewshire are already using Parent Portal for parents and carers to make Parentpay payments online.

**In this new school year, Johnstone High is planning to issue report cards via Parent Portal and therefore we encourage ALL parents to sign up as soon as possible.**

**We are also requesting that parents complete the annual data check (pupil personal details, emergency contacts etc) via Parent Portal. However, if you would prefer a paper copy of the annual data check, please call the school office.**

There is more information on Parent Portal (including step by step help on how to create an account) on the Council website.<https://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10557/ParentsPortal>

If you have any issues creating a Parent Portal or Parent Pay account, please call the school office and staff will be happy to talk you through the process.

**Contacting us - Our House Structure**

Should you need to contact us for any reason, our house structure from August 2021 is as follows:

**DHT Pastoral**

Arran House Mr Munro Mr Rainey

Iona House Ms Cole Miss Docherty

Mull House Mr Menzies Ms Wilson

Skye House Mrs O’Malley Mr Kennedy

Please call the school office on 0300 300 1331 and the first point of contact is typically the Pastoral teacher. You can also email us via the enquiries line: johnstonehighenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk

**Final points**

There will be a number of items in your new session information pack. This year we are issuing these via your email address, but paper copies of the pack are available on request via the office. Some items require a return - should you chose to do so, you can print off reply slips and send them in via your child, however we recommend that you **wait until the survey comes to you via text, week beginning the 16th August – this will capture your responses in a ‘one stop shop’.**

The school calendar will come out to you as soon as we get more clarity on areas such as ongoing covid restrictions about visitors into school, and SQA assessment for 21/22 (all of which impacts tracking, reporting, parents’ evenings and prelims). The school’s improvement plan and standards and qualities report will be posted on our school website in the Autumn term. Any parent wishing a paper copies of these should contact the school office to arrange this to be sent home.

I trust you find the information in this letter of use. Throughout the session further information will be sent to you via HT updates, texts and other means. In addition to this, our website and twitter feed all contain a lot of useful information from subject information or school news. Please remember if you have any specific concerns relating to your child/children do not hesitate to call the school, asking for your child’s Pastoral Support teacher in the first instance.

In conclusion, I am looking forward to working with all pupils, parents and staff over the coming session and thank you in anticipation of your ongoing support as we approach session 2021/22.

Yours sincerely,



Lynne Hollywood

Head Teacher