

Portlethen Academy

Learn and Improve. Get Involved. Think of the Consequences. Respect All.

Dear Parent/Carer,

Summer Update 28 July 2020

I hope you are well and having a good summer, despite the fluctuations in our weather. Although it is not usual to put out a letter in the summer break we are not in a usual year and I wanted to update you on a few items.

Pupil's Returning to School

The Scottish Government will decide whether pupils all return to school in August on Thursday 30 July. Current indications are that this is likely to be the case and we will confirm this after Thursday. It looks like pupils will not have to Social Distance from each other but will have to keep 2m apart from staff, who will also have to socially distance from each other. The detail will be crucial and will require a high level of compliance from all in the school community so that all are as safe as possible. We are currently working on a number of these areas in anticipation of the announcement. As soon as we have the details, we will go through the process of translating this into practice for Portlethen Academy and will then issue this to yourselves so that you can share it with your child(ren).

If it is the case that all pupils return this will be as per the phased pattern in my letter of 1 July 2020 <http://portlethenacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Last-week-of-termFinal-Version.pdf>

Blended Learning Contingency Plan

Regardless of the Scottish Government decision on Thursday 30 July we are required to have a contingency plan in place in the event of pupil's not all being able to return or if we experience a Covid19 outbreak and have to reduce numbers in school. We put considerable amount of work into this in the run up to summer and the planning and procedures around this can be viewed here <http://portlethenacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Portlethen-Academy-Re-Opening-School-Blended-Learning-Model-200720.pdf>

I would stress two key things. Firstly, this is a working document and is constantly being updated and adapted in the light of changing information. Secondly, it is a contingency and is far from ideal in terms of learning and teaching and the welcoming ethos and atmosphere we always aim for. We hope we do not have to use it although a number of procedural elements may be carried over into the model where all pupils are back in school, eg Hygiene, Social Distancing for staff etc., Your comments are welcome and should be sent to the school email address (with Covid 19 Plan B in the subject line) portlethen.aca@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

SQA Results

These will be issued on Tuesday 4 August and we look forward to our young people receiving the recognition of their efforts. Most pupils will have great success, however there will always be cases where young people and their families will want to use the post results service. Details of the procedures for this can be found in Mr Cowie's letter from the end of term

<http://portlethenacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/SQA-Results-2020-Parental-Communication.pdf> If you have any questions these should be directed to the school from 4 August 2020.

We often find that some young people want or need to change their courses after the results have come in. While we appreciate that this will be a pressing matter for them we cannot process this before the start of term and have set aside time then so that young people can consult with their Guidance teacher and subject staff to explore and confirm the best options. While you may wish to email to flag this up please do not expect a response until school is back as teaching staff remain on holiday.

Pupil Attendance and Quarantine

As you will know, quarantine is required after returning from some countries and we have had queries regarding this with young people and staff. The situation is clear that if a pupil, or member of staff, is required to quarantine on return to the UK from abroad they will **not** be able to return to school until they have completed the full time instructed. If this is the case for any of our young people, it would be very helpful to know and we would ask that you alert the school office.

Health and Well Being Focus

Our focus on return will be to support the Health and Wellbeing of all and to get young people and staff back into school and its routines as quickly as possible. We firmly believe these routines help young people manage any anxieties and provide clear structures for support. Our aim will be to support all in the school community as best as we can and to do so we will aim, within health advice, to use our existing systems as much as possible as they are familiar to most pupils and staff. We will spend time explaining these systems to our new S1 pupils as part of their induction. Essentially this structure or process means using class teachers and support staff as the first port of call where young people have anxieties. They will then refer to, or be supported by, Guidance staff and the Year Heads. Where you have concerns for your child these should be communicated to the relevant Guidance teacher.

In conclusion, I hope the above is helpful and we will be in touch over the next couple of weeks as details emerge, and our planning rolls out. Please enjoy the remainder of the summer break.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Morrison

Head Teacher

Portlethen Academy

July 2020