

Portlethen Academy

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

Dear Parent/Carer

As you will be aware from previous letters schools will reopen to pupils next week. We are looking forward to seeing our pupils again, but we also know that staff, pupils and families will be anxious.

Our **phased return plan** is:

- S1 and School Prefects from Wed 12 August to allow a proper induction to the school
- S4-6 from Thursday 13 August to allow induction, course work commencement, SQA appeals and any course changes resulting from results
- S2 and S3 from Monday 17 August for induction and resumption of courses.

We will email any particular joining instructions for each year group to you next week and you will find a level of detail in the link below.

So that young people can return within the Scottish Government's advice, (see the Director's recent letter for the links to this) which was published on 30 July 2020, we have adapted that to our setting and now provide a handbook for parents, pupils and staff. This is available on our website in the letters section and the link is <http://portlethenacademy.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Portlethen-Academy-Re-Opening-School-August-2020.pdf>

I must stress that this document has been worked up at very short notice and is a work in progress. The senior leadership team and a range of other staff have contributed to this work. The majority of it will remain in place, however we expect to learn and adapt as we have staff and young people in the building and the practicalities present themselves. It is essential that you share the document with your child(ren) and discuss the procedures and implications for them when they come to school, so that none of this is a surprise. Pupils will also receive an induction on the day they start back, however there is so much to cover that prior reading is essential. We all have significant responsibilities to reduce the spread and impact of Covid 19 and these apply to young people. It is crucial we all adhere to these so that young people can return and then remain in school without further closures and disruption to learning. The local lockdown in Aberdeen City only reinforces the need for us all to adhere to the advice.

I must also stress that while we have worked within the advice, the reality is that, when all pupils and staff are back, we will have nearly 1,000 people on site with the management and capacity issues that presents. It will not be possible to ensure Physical Distancing for pupils. Scottish Government Advice is that Physical Distancing between young people in secondary schools is not required to ensure a safe return to schools and, indeed, this could only be achieved if school capacity was restricted. We will, however, encourage and facilitate Physical distancing where at all feasible. I ask that you read our return document coupled with your own knowledge of the building so that you can get a flavour of what we and your child will be doing.

If you have questions regarding the advice contact should be made via the school office.

SQA

While we have been delighted by the level of success of many of our pupils, we are concerned at the results that some of our pupils have received. Mr Cowie is working with parents, young people and staff to ensure any appropriate appeals are registered and you should have received a letter from Vincent Docherty, Head of Service, in connection with this. Again, this is available on our website.

BYOD

Bring Your Own device (BYOD) is a very exciting opportunity that would allow your child to use their phone, tablet or laptop in school using the school WiFi. We highlighted this great opportunity before summer and asked that pupils and parents completed a survey. This is essential to our moving forward with this, and I am disappointed that we are still well below the required threshold. Please can I ask that you check with your child and, if their survey is incomplete, you work with them to submit this. In order for this to happen I need your child and you to complete the survey below.

Please note the following:

- Your child will need to use their Glow Account (**if they get an error message about permission paste the link below into Chrome**)
- The survey starts with responses from your child but towards the end of the survey there is a section for you to complete.

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=oyzTzM4Wj0KVQTctawUZKVOaer7Q1MhIv2IEAtd8xSpUMTFLVIFOSEc3M0JWU0ZQWdc4TDdQSlhRQS4u>

In conclusion, we look forward to welcoming pupils back to Portlethen Academy, safely and purposefully. Their learning and socialisation have been impacted upon and we are keen to help them get back on track. We can do this with the support of the pupils, parents and the wider community. School will be a different experience for pupils and will not feel like it did back in February, however we will do all we can to make it a positive and supportive experience. We look forward to working with you to that end.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Morrison

Head Teacher, Portlethen Academy, August 2020