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**Aberdeenshire**  
COUNCIL



Dear Parent or Carer,

## August Newsletter

A warm welcome to Macduff primary school's New school year. Things are a little bit different this year and we are making every effort to ensure that children can return to school in a safe and supported way. I hope you and your family are keeping well. We have made an extensive risk assessment which can be viewed on our school website. There is also a separate risk assessment for nursery as they are under slightly different rules. I apologise we are sending out information so near to the beginning of term but things are rapidly changing as the virus is still in the community and country. I am writing to you with an update following the announcement from the Scottish Government that the arrangements for school have changed. I realise that this is again a lot of information in one letter so apologies in advance!

Unfortunately I am unable to join you for the start of the term as I have been advised that I am too clinically vulnerable. I hope to return to school soon. I will be working from home and you will be able to contact me. In the mean time Mrs Allan has agreed to work full time to ensure that all is taken care of in school. This means that there will be Mrs Allan and Mrs Johnston in school full time and Mrs Simpson Wednesday to Friday.

For the vast majority of pupils, the return date is the 12<sup>th</sup> August, there are a few individual transition meetings in place but these parents will already be aware of this. This means that we have over 300 children and 40 staff returning to the school building and the need to ensure that the Scottish Government's guidance is followed, i.e.:

- 2m physical distancing is not required between our children but should be followed between adults and between adult and child
- Need for enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning
- Focus on personal hygiene e.g. frequent washing/sanitising of hands amongst children and staff

So, we have had to make changes to how we operate as a school and this is new for our pupils, staff and parents. These changes are a starting point and as we all are now aware, the situation is ever-changing so there may need to be additional measures put in place or a relaxation of some of these protocols. We will review on an ongoing basis and in line with the guidance given from Scottish Government and Aberdeenshire Council.

### **Return from holidays.**

We ask that everyone abides by the latest guidance from Scottish Government and it is particularly important that if anybody test positive for COVID 19 that you self isolate all members of the household and alert the school as soon as possible. If you have returned from holiday from a destination that is not exempt from quarantine please remember that you must self isolate all members of the household for the quarantine period. The list of excluded countries is available here: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-public-health-checks-at-borders/pages/exemptions/>

## **Blended Learning**

As indicated in the email sent out on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July, this is now Plan B and we may have to shift to the Blended Model of learning if there is an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases or a local flare-up. Teachers will ensure that children know how to access Google Classroom, where our online learning will be.

## **Hand Washing Routine**

Children and staff will wash their hands on arrival, before and after breaks/lunch. This is in addition to washing their hands after going to the toilet. Children can bring their own soap and hand cream into school **if** they have sensitive hands, this must be clearly labelled with their name.

## **Arriving at School**

- Please drop your child off at one of our 2 open gates, Myrus Circle or one off the staff car park (which will temporarily remain open), if they feel comfortable coming into school (it is essential that we minimise the number of parents in the playground). There will be additional staffing present in the playground to welcome the children back and guide them to the correct place.
- P2-7 children will line up at class muster points as painted on playground, These points have been moved for the safety of our staff to ensure distancing can be followed.
- P1 children will have a slightly later start time initially for the first 2 weeks of 9:10.
- Teachers will collect their class from this point sharply (9:00) and lead them into school, where they will proceed straight to their classroom.
- On arrival at the classroom, children will wash their hands at the sink in the classroom.
- Cloakrooms will not be used at this time.
- Car Park / Vehicle Access- Our car park is always extremely busy and it would be beneficial if as many families as possible walked or if this is not possible, chose a place to park a small distance away from the school and then walked- 'park and stride'. Patience and cooperation will be essential around drop off and pick up times. It is about the safety of all children. Please note that there will be **no vehicular access** to the Berrymuir road car park which is for staff only.

## **In Class**

- We have rearranged the furniture and have removed all soft furnishings.
- Each child will have their own tray with resources, rather than sharing.
- Children should leave personal belongings at home, no pencil cases please. (More details below).
- Your child can bring a schoolbag if they wish, this will need to sit under their desk as cloakrooms will not be used initially.
- Once children are feeling settled, the main focus for our curriculum will be **Health and Wellbeing, Literacy and Numeracy.**
- A Home Learning jotter will be issued in week 3 (28<sup>th</sup> Aug), this is to be used if needed to complete tasks at home. The tasks will be shared through Google classrooms / Learning Journals. These jotters will stay at home and the sharing of learning will be through the online platform.
- Further information will be given when reading books are going to be issued towards the end of term 1.

## Playtime

- Children will wash their hands before going out to the playground to eat their snack.
- Children are encouraged to bring a healthy snack for playtime e.g. fruit, cereal bar, baked crisps etc. We promote a 'one snack rule'.
- Currently there will not be tuck shop so snacks will need to be brought from home.
- We will have staggered break times to minimise contact with other year groups.
- Children will play in a designated area of the playground, which they will be told by their teacher. Please discuss with your child it is important for them to stay within this area. Guidance is that we should keep children within the same contact groups for the duration of the school day, so we will be keeping year groups together.
- We have a one way system in place for children travelling around the school, however movement within the school will be minimised.

## Lunch Time

- There will only be 2 choices for lunch during the first two weeks.
- Children will be asked to choose their lunch at registration time, teachers will then log this on the system.
- There will be staggered lunches to reduce the number of children in the canteen, hall and out in the playground
- Children will wash their hands prior to lunch, in their classrooms. Those who have then been outside prior to coming to the dinner hall will sanitise hands on arrival at the hall. Children will sit in their class groups for lunch.
- P1-3 are still entitled to a free school lunch.
- Children can bring a packed lunch if they prefer, this **must** be in a disposable bag rather than a lunch box. All packaging should be able to be binned.
- Please note as indicated previously there will be NO cash accepted in school for catering, all monies must be added to accounts online.

## Home Time

- P1 & P2 children will be dismissed from the relevant external door a collection point in the large playground.
- P3-7 will be dismissed from the relevant external doors, a year group at a time. This may mean that there is a slight delay in children exiting the building, however we hope this will be within a 5 minute window and no child will leave the building before 3:05pm.
- **For everyone's safety please do not approach staff at home time**, if you require to speak to staff please contact the office who will be happy to arrange a call back or email. 01261 455765.
- **Please ensure that you socially distance from other parents and children while you wait on your child.**

Parents / Carers should only access the playground where absolutely necessary. Please consider an alternative meeting point out with the playground, particularly if your child/ren are in P4 upwards and they are able to walk a short distance by themselves or with friends. Please ensure your child knows what the arrangements are.

At this time I have not put in place staggered start and finish times, as I recognise this will cause further implications for families and childcare. However please note that keeping the school day to 9:00am-3:05pm is dependent on your co-operation in ensuring you maintain social distancing from other adults and do not gather at the school gates or within the playground.

Rather than waiting for children at the bus stop we suggest that the grass at the front of the school would alive for many parents too socially distance whilst waiting for children to come out. We have made provision For primary one children To be brought into the playground in the first week by their parents at a later time of 9:10 to aid transition

### **Uniform**

- Children should wear a white polo shirt or white shirt and a school jumper/cardigan or a blue jumper / cardigan.
- We have decided to relax the uniform this year to allow children to wear leggings/jogging bottoms, trousers or a skirt to school – this is due to the increase in the amount of outdoor learning we will be doing.
- Waterproof jacket – children will be outside in all weathers, unless there is extremely heavy rain or a weather warning.
- PE Lessons – At the moment children will not change for PE lessons, all PE lessons will take place outside in August.
- Water bottle – please send your child to school with a full water bottle with their name on it. Water coolers are currently turned off for hygiene reasons.

### **Face coverings**

The Scottish Government have indicated that face coverings are not required in schools. However, some staff and pupils may choose to wear them. There may also be some situations where staff are required to wear one, along with aprons and gloves e.g. if they need to work in close contact with a pupil to support them. It would be worth telling your child this is ok and nothing to be alarmed about.

### **If you are sending your child to school with a face covering please ensure the following:**

- children know it is not a play item and should not be shared with friends
- children know how to take it off and put it on correctly. Staff are not able to help with this
- provide a sandwich bag for it to be stored in for when they need to remove it for eating
- it is clean
- it is named
- if masks are found lying around and we cannot immediately locate the owner, the mask will be disposed of. Please ensure your child is aware this will happen, that it is for the safety of everyone

Children can bring their own hand sanitising gel, if you wish, to be kept in their bag. Please ensure this is clearly labelled with their name. Please note hand sanitiser gel cannot be shared, even between siblings.

### **Medical Conditions**

- If your child has a medical condition, please bring their medication to school on their first day and complete a medication form – there will be a table at the main entrance to collect medication. Please adhere to social distancing.
- If your child has a serious medical condition and you are unsure if they will return to school in August, please contact the school.

### **Communication**

- We will continue to email you using Groupcall – please ensure that the office have the correct email address and phone number.
- You can email the school – [macduff.sch@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:macduff.sch@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

- We have been advised against staff and parents having face to face contact at this time. If staff need to share information they will call later in the day.
- If you need to speak to staff, please contact the office and a message will be passed on or a call back will be arranged.

This is the updated plan for August, as I'm sure you will appreciate it is subject to change depending on the situation with Covid-19. As an appendix, there are further details given on our reducing risk measures. I would like to thank you for your understanding during this challenging time. Please be assured that we are doing everything possible to keep your child happy and safe in school.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me, I am happy to discuss any concerns or suggestions.

### **Snow Closures**

Yes it seems strange but I do have to say that if school is closed due to adverse weather then google classrooms will be used for children's work in the same way. We advertise our closure on the council web page for school closure and via twitter and facebook.

Kind Regards

T Walker  
Headteacher

## **Appendix 1 – Macduff Primary- Reducing the Risk Measures**

A detailed risk assessment, in line with the Scottish Government's Preparing for the start of the new term August 2020 document, has been prepared specific to Macduff Primary. As part of this a number of procedures have been put in place, in addition to the regular handwashing and 'good hygiene' procedures set out nationally, to ensure the safety of all pupils and staff at all times. Social distancing is still required for adults and whilst not compulsory for pupils, steps have been taken to keep pupils in their class groups as much as possible. These safety procedures have been documented below:

- Pupils should arrive as close to the 9:00am bell as possible and make their way to their lines / entry points.
- Pupils are being provided with a pack containing a pencil, rubber, ruler, sharpener, coloured pencils and pens, glue stick and scissors which will be kept in their own trays.
- Jotters will be kept in pupils trays for pupils to collect independently when required.
- P.E will be outdoors as much as possible with non equipment based activities initially.
- Where ICT equipment has to be shared it will be wiped down prior to being passed onto the next class.
- Cloakrooms will not be used and so jackets and bags will be taken to their classroom and placed under desks / over chair.
- Pupils will not be delegated 'classroom jobs' initially – this is not ideal as this is something they enjoy but is to reduce cross contamination and reduce movement across the school.
- Assemblies will take place virtually.
- Break and lunchtimes are staggered so not all classes moving at any one time.
- Pupils will have areas of the playground which they will be advised to use rather than 'over mixing'.
- Staff movement in classrooms is being timetabled for lengthier periods to reduce staff movement
- Classroom doors and windows will remain open for ventilation purposes.
- Fixed equipment in the playground such as the trim trail, table top benches and football / basketball equipment will not be in use initially. This will be reviewed in week 4. There will be class sets of playground equipment.
- Shared equipment between classes will be avoided as much as possible and where this is required will be wiped down before use.
- Access to the school will be by appointment only, this is to ensure we have a room available and set up which meets with the social distancing criteria.
- Communication with parents will be by phone or email
- There will be no volunteers in school during Aug

### **Parent Council AGM**

We will be holding a virtual parent council AGM on the 27th August at 7:00 PM and we will send an invitation to all who wish to attend. Unfortunately, at the moment we are unable to hold it in school however if the guidance changes then we would change to a physical meeting. Further information will be given nearer to the time so please save the date. We are looking for new members to join our parent council especially people from younger years with our aim to be that we have a member for each class. We have four meetings a year and they are friendly, happy and very valuable to school. If you have never attended a meeting then why not make this one your first? we will be very glad to see you. The parent council carry out a vital role in representing the views of all parents and work closely with the school to try to make improvements for all children.

**Breakfast Club**

Unfortunately, we are unable to run Breakfast club in the first few weeks of term as this would allow interactions between many different class bubbles. We will advise parents when we are able to reopen.

**Alltneric Residential Trip**

Unfortunately, under government guidance we are unable to attend any residential trips for the foreseeable future. All parents who have paid towards the trip will have their money refunded as soon as we can arrange it. I know this is disappointing for everyone.

**PEF Funding**

Unfortunately due to lockdown our proposed development work to create a nature room has been prevented from going ahead over the summer as we had hoped. We intend to carry on funding our early intervention provision through emergent literacy. We are aware we will need to increase staffing for this term to ensure a smooth transition back into school. Also we part fund our Breakfast club through the PEF money we receive.