

Dear Parent / Carer

As you will be aware, on Tuesday of this week, the First Minister announced that the next phase of young people returning to school would take place from 15 March. We are currently planning how that will look across Mintlaw Academy. We are planning to return young people to school between 15th of March until the end of term (Thursday 1st April) as follows:

<i>Monday / Tuesdays</i>	<i>S4 – S6</i>
<i>Wednesdays</i>	<i>S3</i>
<i>Thursdays</i>	<i>S2</i>
<i>Fridays</i>	<i>S1</i>

Our S4-S6 days will be structured around the youngsters' column choices to ensure all curricular areas are covered across the two days. We will share the detail of the two days via seniors' Teams pages next week. Wednesdays will also be restructured around S3 youngsters' curricular options to ensure all areas are covered across the day. Once again the detail of this will be shared with pupils via Teams pages into next week.

S1/2 will have a more generic experience whilst in school from Wednesday 18th to the end of term, incorporating Literacy, Numeracy, Health and Wellbeing, Outdoor Learning and a cross curricular experience. Very much here the emphasis will be on young people benefiting from a return to in-person delivery and a degree of social interaction with their peers.

Remote Learning will continue from the period of Monday 15th to the end of term but, given the priority of staff to deliver in school to smaller groups of youngsters, will very much exist to complement in-person delivery rather than provide additional learning.

Youngsters of Key Workers and vulnerable young people will continue to access the campus as previously Monday to Friday and there will also be ongoing opportunities for seniors engaged in practical work to continue to access specific subject areas but this group will now be supported in terms of practical work Wednesday to Friday only meaning S4-S6 pupils can work across all their curricular areas Monday / Tuesday alongside their peers. This will mean changes to dates previously issued in some cases. Please ask your son/daughter to be meticulous in checking their Teams pages next week for the most up to date information.

A number of key differences will exist in terms of in-school expectations from Monday 15th March:

- 1m distancing will be required on school transport. Can I ask that any parent able to transport their son/daughter to and from school please do so to relieve pressure on school transport.*
- 2m distancing will be mandatory at all times indoors*
- Face coverings should be worn indoors at all times other than pupils who are exempt from their use*
- Pupils will remain on campus all day*
- Pupils should bring a packed lunch (lunches will be provided for all FSM youngsters)*
- Interval / lunch to be taken outside wherever possible*
- Lunch to be shortened Wednesday – Friday to 50 minutes, meaning the school day Mon – Wed will end at 2.50 pm up till 1st April.*

Can I also strongly recommend that all S4 – S6 youngsters make use of the Lateral Flow testing programme.

Many of our senior phase pupils who have been attending school for practical lessons will already be aware of this information, for parents/carers of pupils who will return in addition to those on 15th March you will find attached important information relating to the new Schools/ELC Asymptomatic Testing Programme, which is being put in place as part of the package of COVID-19 risk reduction mitigations in schools across Scotland and detail of how it will operate at Mintlaw Academy.

*Please discuss the contents of the attached information and the privacy notice with your son/daughter. If your child wishes to participate in testing, and you are content for them to do so, please ensure that the attached consent form is completed and returned during collection of a test kit. **Test kits will not be issued without appropriate consent being in place.** Kits can be collected from the main school office during normal school hours, Monday to Friday from Monday 8th March in preparation for Monday 15th March return.*

In closing, can I apologise for the amount of information here. Hopefully all is clear but you will appreciate we have had to do a great deal of planning in a fairly short period of time since Tuesday's announcement. As above further detail will emerge next week but I felt it important that you were aware of the general direction of our planning this week. We are all pleased that more young people will be returning to school from the 15th but aware that it is likely to be a challenging 14 days as everyone, pupils and staff, readjust to the changes. Can I stress the importance of all pupils supporting the Health and Safety of both their peers and school staff by following the protocols above and that, should any young person find these protocols difficult to adhere to, it may be that we may have to look to amend start dates to post the Easter holidays in individual cases.

Speaking for myself I am very happy we have made it to the weekend. Hopefully all of you get a chance to relax and rewind a little before what looks like being a very busy week next week once again.

Many thanks once again for your ongoing support.

L Duthie HT

Linda Duthie
Head Teacher