

Dear Parent/Carer,

## September 2021 – Update

### START OF TERM

It has been good to welcome all pupils back to school after the Summer break. The first few weeks have focussed on re-establishing good routines and ensuring ongoing covid mitigations are working. We have a strategy in place to keep a close eye on each year group as we monitor progress and any impact from the events of the pandemic over the last 18 months.

This includes:

- Senior Leadership Team (SLT)/Guidance Teacher monitoring
- A revised tracking and reporting calendar for this session to ensure regular contact with parents.
- Additional staffing money from Scottish Government used to increase our capacity to support numeracy and literacy.
- Senior pupils supporting younger pupils through a peer mentoring programme in Maths/English and volunteering programme across other faculties.
- Oracy Cambridge – we have been successful in securing the support of a Cambridge University educational project which aims to support pupils with developing confidence in articulating ideas. Given the effects of the pandemic I feel this is a good time to pursue this prestigious and exciting project. A team of staff will begin this work over the coming months.

### COVID MITIGATIONS

Pupils continue to do an excellent job adhering to the current mitigations.

Although we have had a steady trickle of Covid cases this term, the numbers have stayed low. I would like to thank parents/carers for the very proactive approach taken in keeping pupils off school when exhibiting any symptoms of illness. Alongside our mitigations here, this has undoubtedly played an important role in reducing self-isolation numbers and keeping absence to a minimum.

Most pupils who have gone on to test PCR positive have been identified either through their symptoms or through positive LFD tests, so testing continues to play an important role. LFD test kits can be picked up by pupils at 8.45am each day or in the last 15 mins of each lunchtime from Room 1.

As announced by the First Minister last week, the Scottish Government have decided to keep all current Covid mitigations in place, including the wearing of face coverings, until at least the end of this term (Friday 15<sup>th</sup> October.) The position thereafter will be advised by the Government and I will keep you updated.

When phoning the school office to report covid related absences, please phone the normal absence line and leave a message. We are hoping to launch a recorded message with covid advice for parents shortly. This will contain information on the most up to date situation regarding self-isolation requirements for school pupils.

The DHSC have updated their self-reporting portal so that users can now set up accounts and report for others in their household. This allows parents/carers to report test results for multiple children without having to re-enter details every time. The link to the LFD reporting portal is available via this link: [Report your coronavirus \(COVID-19\) test result | NHS inform](#).

## **SHOW MY HOMEWORK**

Show My Homework has served us well over the last few years as a location where all homework was collated and could be viewed by parents. Unfortunately, due to GDPR issues with the hosting of the data we are unable to continue using this package. Staff have already moved away from Show My Homework and will post all homework on Microsoft Teams/Google Classroom.

## **WHOLE SCHOOL PRIVACY NOTICE**

The whole school privacy notice has been updated to include information on the EMA (Educational Maintenance Allowance). The updated notice can be accessed from our website - [Aboyne Academy](#)

## **HOUSE EVENTS**

The House championship 2021/2022 is well underway with House Week 1 taking place this week featuring a whole school Kahoot quiz, a community art project to write positive message on rocks which will be placed around the school catchment area and a cross country event.

New House Leadership Teams were appointed over the last 3 weeks and I was really impressed with the positive approach of the new Captains, Vice Captains, Senior Prefects and Prefects. I look forward to working alongside them to continue to improve the school during this session.

House Council representatives are currently being recruited for the first round of House Council meetings which will take place week beginning Monday 27<sup>th</sup> September.

## **WORK EXPERIENCE WEEKS 2022**

Due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic it is unlikely that the Work Experience Unit can offer the traditional week-long end of S3 placement for 2022. Many employers still have staff working from home and others are keen to only have essential staff on their premises.

In the meantime, we will continue to arrange flexible placements for senior phase pupils (depending on the Covid 19 guidance from the Scottish Government) with priority given to pupils who are Christmas leavers and those looking to leave school at the end of S4 in May 2022. Prioritisation will also be given to work placements which are part of a certificated course, eg SQA Work Based Learning courses and Foundation Apprenticeships.

## EXTRA-CURRICULAR GROUPS

I have been keen to support the resumption of extra-curricular activities and am pleased to report that a range of groups are now getting up and running subject to covid mitigations. Details can be found in the daily school bulletin but opportunities include Basketball, Climbing Club, Dungeons and Dragons Club, Drama Club, Duke of Edinburgh, Football, Geography Club, Hockey, Monday Art catch up, Monday Manga Club, Public Speaking, Pupil Participation Forum, Pipe Band, Netball, Running Club, Senior Health Leaders, Senior Sports Leaders, STEM club, S1/2 Greenpower Car Project, S5/6 Young Enterprise, School Ski Team, Wind Band, Senior Singers, Junior Choir, Rock Band, Ukulele Group, Brass Ensemble, Ceilidh Band and Soul Band. A big thanks to all staff and pupil volunteers who are supporting these groups.

## SDS INTRODUCTION SESSION FOR S1 PARENTS

Do you want to know more about Skills Development Scotland (SDS) career advice and support for your young person throughout their time at school? Join our careers advisers Lesley and Gordon to hear about SDS, the role of SDS careers advisers in schools and information to support career planning. The online session will also introduce our careers web service [My World of Work](#), which has a dedicated area for parents and carers.

Parents/carers can register for our Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 session [here](#).  
<https://s1parentsandcarers.eventbrite.co.uk>

If you have any queries please contact us via the parental support email at [aboyne.support@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:aboyne.support@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) and we will get the appropriate member of staff to respond.

Yours sincerely



Michael Foy

Head Teacher