

Parent Update 7: First Ministers Statement 2 March 2021

Today in Parliament the First Minister gave an update on the return school learning on-site for students. This builds on her statement in Parliament last Tuesday. **The next significant date we are preparing for is Monday 15th March**, unless new public health circumstances force a reconsideration.

For Penicuik High School this means:

- All students will return to spend some time in-school from Monday 15th March until the Easter break **and it is a phased part-time return for all our students**
- **Senior Phase students**, who are working towards national qualifications under the Alternative Certification Model, **will have priority for in-school time**; we will use a split cohort model to maximise our capacity at S4-6 to have students safely in school.
- It is **expected that all students will receive some in-school education** up to the Easter break; at this stage it is too early to state how much in-school time will be provided for S1/S2/S3 students and what it means for individual students/classes as we work through the logistics.
- We see some of the main benefits for young people coming in as: a chance to see staff and check in on where they feel they are at, mix safely with peers to reconnect socially and feel more ready to come in hopefully full-time after the Easter break.
- All students will, at least until Easter, be expected to observe the current requirement for **2m distancing in-school**. It should be noted this is a significant change for our students and **given the physical layout of the building limits the numbers of students we can safely accommodate in-school at any one time**
- **Face coverings** will need to be worn at all times, except for those with notified exemptions
- **Remote learning programmes will continue for those not able to be in-school**; the return of students to school alongside the Hub students and work we are doing supporting vulnerable students and those with additional support needs in school, will have an effect on the remote learning programme we are able to offer. This is largely due to the staffing resource required to staff the school with the 2 meter distancing rule as we will be forced to split classes and put in additional staffing. Whilst we have managed to up the remote live learning offer next week for S1/2 it is unlikely we will be able to maintain that leading up to Easter due to the fact the Government decided to offer in-school time to all levels.
- We will soon be in a position to publish information about additional twilight and Easter study support sessions that will run as part of an attainment recovery programme to support SQA candidates as they come back into school. This program will run right through until May and is being led by Mrs Burgess. *More information to follow.*

The First Minister has stated, 'a clear expectation that all secondary school pupils will be back in school on a full time basis following the Easter holidays'. This is likely to mean that the 2 meter distancing rule in school will be relaxed but I will communicate with you later this month on the arrangements for a possible full return after Easter break

From Monday 15th March, all staff and Senior Phase students will continue to be offered twice-weekly Covid-19 lateral flow testing. We continue to strongly encourage all eligible students and staff to take part in this programme of at-home testing as it is a further way in which we can ensure that our school remains as safe as possible.

Further details on arrangements for Monday 15th March will be sent out next week including cohort and timetable information and the BGE (S1-3) programme.

Craig Biddick

Head Teacher

5 February 2021