



2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

Dear Fishermoss Family

### Welcoming Pupils to Fishermoss School in August and some final words!

I do hope this continues to find you all well and looking forward to some time out from online 'school' for your children and lengthy e mails from the Head Teacher! I would recommend you have a cup of tea in hand before sitting down to read this e mail. It is another long one! An end of term newsletter like no other!

Following the Deputy First Minister's statement in Parliament last week we have been busy preparing to welcome pupils to Fishermoss School in August. We are required to continue to be led by further advice, guidance and reassurance coming from both Scottish Government and Public Health Scotland over the coming days and weeks which we will use to support and finalise plans for a safe return to school buildings from August. An announcement is anticipated at the end of July confirming what the plans for August will be. Schools are required to continue to prepare contingency plans should there be any lapse in our positive progress in suppressing the virus in Scotland meaning schools are unable to re-open fully.

Should we be able to welcome all pupils back to school in August, the plan is for a 'soft start/phased return'. Aberdeenshire Schools welcome the opportunity to be able to deliver this model as it is supportive of our pupils.

Given our current pupils will have been absent from school for nearly 5 months, and new and returning pupils have missed out on key transition activities, anything that can be done to support our pupils' return to school is important. As previously stated, for some pupils, parents, and staff this is an anxious time and we want to be as supportive of all as we can. We continue to deal with a Pandemic and the planned return to school does not herald its departure! That said, the following is about welcoming and embracing the hopeful return to school, supporting all with this transition and most importantly keeping us all safe, in the best way we can!

### Soft Start Phased Return

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August are staff In Service Days therefore school is closed to pupils. From Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August we will commence our 'soft start/phased return'. This will involve pupils returning to school in small groups or 'bubbles' following which it will be everyone back in full classes from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August. You have heard me mention 'bubbles' before so we plan to have pupils return in these 'bubbles' Wed 12<sup>th</sup> to Friday 14<sup>th</sup> to support them to adjust to returning to school and to help them with the new norm!

**The phased return to school settings is for pupils who are not shielding, self-isolating and present with no symptoms of COVID-19.**



From today, office staff will e mail families individually to inform you which bubble your children will be in. Please note that this task takes time so some families will naturally hear before others. Thank you in advance for your patience. Bubbles have been arranged so that siblings all attend on the same day. As previously shared, with over 200 families in our school and some classes having as many as 18 siblings to factor into bubbles, this has been a challenge.

Pupils being in their bubbles for just one day will give them the experience of what it will be like should we be required to revert to bubbles and blended learning at any point in the future during the Pandemic. We will not however be expecting them to social distance from each other unless told otherwise. This is purely to have pupils attend in smaller groups to support their transition back to school!

For the soft start/phased return, Bubble 1 will attend school Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August, Bubble 2 will attend Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> August and Bubble 3 will attend on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August. Week commencing Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August will see all pupils in fulltime, apart from Primary 1 pupils who will attend mornings only as is standard practice as they start their Primary School Adventure! A separate letter will follow to Primary 1 Parents to share further transition opportunities.

### School Transport

We continue to wait for further information from Aberdeenshire Council regarding school transport. Parents are advised to keep an eye on the Council website over the summer holiday period.

### Arriving at school during week 1

As we have the luxury of a large open green space by the public path at the side of the school nearest Bourtree park, the following arrangements will avoid the need for significant staggering to start and finish times to the school day. **Playground space continues to be limited due to ongoing building works.** Pupils should arrive at school as close as possible to the start of the school day, 9am. Primary 1 pupils however should arrive for 9:10am. They should remain with their parents outside the playground until all other lines have been taken in.

Primaries 1, 2, 3, 3/4, 4, 4/5 and Primary 7 are to line up on the basketball court at the side of the school nearest Bourtree Park. Pupils should enter the playground by the side entrance steps by Bourtree Park. There will be cones in place clearly indicating where each class should line up in single file. The cones will be visible from the public path by the side of the school so parents can point them out to younger children. Parents are please asked not to enter the playground except for parents of Primary 1 pupils at 9:10am. Please continue to remember social distancing from each other and school staff. This is in line with Risk Assessment advice currently provided to schools. Teachers will collect their class from the basketball court and take them to the appropriate entrance door and to their class. If for any reason on arriving at school your child does not wish to line up, then please remain with your child outside the playground until their teacher arrives rather than going into the playground with them. **These arrangements are temporary until pupils become familiar with where their classroom is and their specific entrance door.**



Primaries 5, 6 and Primary 6/7 will line up at the front of the school by the main entrance. They should enter the playground by the entrance on Berrymuir Road by the bike shelter. Cones and signs will be in place to make it obvious where pupils should line up. Again, parents should not enter the front of the school or line up with their child. Apologies but we are required to discourage parents from congregating and gathering around the school. Parents are being encouraged to drop off their children and leave where possible. This is to ensure social distancing with other parents and school staff.

### **Collecting your children**

Please remain outside the school perimeter fence and make use of the large open green spaces by the public path and Bourtree Park. Teachers will bring lines back outside to where pupils lined up at the start of the school day. Primary 1 pupils should be collected at 3:10pm. Only Primary 1 pupils will be lined up in the playground at this time. Primary 2 pupils should be collected at 3:15pm and all other pupils will be dismissed safely at 3:20pm by teachers leading their lines outside.

Please keep the side steps into the school playground by the public path clear, and the Berrymuir Road entrance, to support us dismissing pupils at the end of the day.

### **Bourtree Carpark**

Please be advised that spaces are limited in Bourtree carpark as school staff and building contractors are parking there due to ongoing building works at Fishermoss. Fishermoss Staff carpark is currently out of bounds to staff as it is being used for building materials. Apologies for any inconvenience caused.

### **Handwashing**

To help ensure that a rigorous hygiene regime is maintained we are asked to ensure that pupils and staff should wash their hands:

- before leaving home
- on arrival at school/setting
- after using the toilet
- after breaks and sporting activities
- before food preparation
- before eating any food, including snacks
- before leaving school/setting

Please note the request for children to wash their hands before leaving home for school as we would be grateful for parental support with that one. We are sure you have already been encouraging regular handwashing at home and there are a significant number of 'You Tube', child appropriate, hand washing film clips that can easily be accessed online. A most appropriate Fishermoss Family Summer Holiday Homework activity! Please do however feel free to arrange for your child to carry their own hand sanitizer at school.

### **School Catering**

Please refer to the e mail sent to parents from school Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June



### Visitors

Only essential visitors should be permitted to access the school. Parents are asked to email/telephone school regarding any enquiries and should avoid coming into the school reception area.

### Physical Education (PE)

PE lessons will be delivered outside in the new term if weather conditions permit. Teachers will inform you at the start of the new session in their class newsletter which days your child will have PE.

### Changing Shoes

As is standard practice at Fisher Moss, please ensure your child has indoor shoes that are named.

### Breaktimes

Please ensure your child has suitable footwear and a waterproof jacket as we will want pupils to be outdoors as much as possible.

### Pupil belongings from session 19/20

Could returning pupils please bring a large plastic or paper bag with them to school on their first day so they can take home their work from this past academic year, and any personal belongings they may have left in trays. We will make separate arrangements for items belonging to our current Primary 7 pupils!

### Water Fountains

Current advice is that water fountains in school should be used to fill water bottles only and not to drink from. I would encourage children to bring sufficient water with them from home to last the day to avoid the use of water fountains.

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)/Face coverings

There is no routine need for PPE (masks, gloves and aprons), practising good hand hygiene is the recommended way to protect against infection.

Should any pupil require intimate care, support staff will be required to wear PPE. To help pupils who may be anxious about what PPE will look like, there is a picture of their Head Teacher wearing it on our website under the tab Parents -> Home Learning Links. Apologies in advance but the thumbs up is not belittling what is happening in any way but rather to reassure pupils who will have significant concerns and want to know more fully what to expect.

Given face coverings may be mandatory in some places going forward, such as public transport and shops, we await further guidance and advice regarding their use in schools. We await further national guidance and information regarding risk assessments for a full return of pupils in August.



**Contingency Plan... which we hope we don't need to implement!**

Should Government advice be that we are unable to have everyone return to school in August then the phased/soft start for week one will not be possible. Bubble 1 only will attend during week 1. Pupils would return to school in bubbles with the following rota of attendance to accommodate social distancing:

Group/Bubble 1 will attend school on weeks 1, 4 and 7

Group/Bubble 2 would attend on weeks 2, 5 and 8

Group/Bubble 3 would attend on weeks 3, 6 and 9.

Pupils attend Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday only, with the exception of week 1 where bubble 1 will attend Wed 12<sup>th</sup>, Thu 13<sup>th</sup> & Fri 14<sup>th</sup>. There will be no face to face teaching on Wednesdays, apart from week 1 for Bubble 1. Wednesdays will be non-class contact time for teaching staff and time for teachers to touch base with pupils who are not accessing school that week. For the contingency plan, Primary 1 bubbles will attend mornings only for weeks 1, 2 and 3.

To reassure pupils that classrooms at Fishermoss will not look particularly different with 2m social distancing in place we have put a photograph on the website under the tab Parents -> Home Learning Links. Desks and seats have been strategically placed to facilitate 2m social distancing and to allow for movement to the toilet. Some pupils would be delighted to have such a big desk space to themselves!

Schools will be offering a blended approach to learning, through both face to face and digital remote learning. This will look different for each setting based on staffing, roll, school building and facilities management. Further information regarding blended learning for Fishermoss will be shared at the start of the new session, if required.

Where pupils will line up in the morning will not change from the information provided above. The only difference will be yellow lines to support with social distancing. We will also operate staggered start, finish, break and lunchtimes to accommodate social distancing in the playground.

I do pray our contingency plans will not be required in August as this will mean positive progress in supressing the virus and a more 'normal' start to the new school year for our pupils!

Apologies for the 'Keep out' messages above regarding coming into the school playground and building! This clearly goes against the grain of the welcoming ethos we pride ourselves in and doesn't quite give the 'Welcome Back' feeling but it is all being done to protect our very precious Fishermoss Family and for no other reason. Once we receive National Advice re moving forward, we will be in a better position to plan school events for next session and share with you the options available to us all.

We want to thank you for your messages of thanks, support and encouragement. You will never know how much they have meant. We also thank you for all you have done to support and encourage our pupils, and each other, over these past few months while



juggling working from home, running a home and making sense of it all! We shall of course never be able to thank enough our Fishermoss Family Key Workers! Thank you to parents who have continued to support school behind the scenes with School uniform, organising P7 Leaver's Hoodies & P7 Autograph books and lots of other thoughtful things including a P7 Lockdown Leavers video!

The last words need to go to our pupils! Well done to all of you who were bright eyed, and bushy tailed fully embracing online learning! Well done also to those who managed to be out of pyjamas by lunchtime and well done for keeping so positive amongst it all and hanging in there in whatever way you have been able! Please do reassure pupils they are not to worry about their levels of engagement in online learning or otherwise! We will get them back on track!

I particularly want to mention our Primary 7 Pupils as they did not get the final term at Primary School that they so deserved. They should be so proud of all they have achieved at Fishermoss School over the years and we wish them every success moving onto their Secondary Education!

Congratulations to the following Primary 7 pupils who participated in the **Scottish Maths Challenge**: Bailey Horne and Aaron Burns for achieving Silver Award and Amy Walker for achieving Bronze Award

Thank you to our pupils who took part in our **Well-Being Indicators Drawing Competition**. Congratulations to Gabriella Paterson P5, Tobe Ikenwilo P6, Ross Morrison P1/2A, Yashvika Yalamanchili P1/2A, Archie Robertson P6, Sophie Middleton P5, Siana Angus P2, Gracie Thornton P4, Ritchie Horne P5, Cohen Leith P6 and Charlie Tait P2/3! The winning entries have been incorporated into a banner at school for all to see. The competition will be run again in the new academic year as we are aware not everyone had access to drawing materials during lockdown.

We wish Pupils and Parents who are leaving Fishermoss every success for the future! We will miss you but will not forget you. You will always remain part of the Fishermoss Family!

We continue to remember those in our Fishermoss Family who have lost loved ones through this difficult time. We also remember families who have lost employment and face challenging days ahead.

Wishing you all some summer sunshine and please stay safe!

Kindest regards

Mrs Margaret M Ferguson  
Head Teacher

