

# Stranraer Academy

Ref: AF/kr

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Head Teacher (Acting):  
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Dear Parents / Carers

Wishing all our families a happy and healthy new year.

I write to you at the start of the new spring term. I like calling it the spring term as it reminds me that longer, warmer days are coming. I hope this is a metaphor for our dealings with the pandemic this year, but while hoping for the best, we are planning for a potentially challenging term.

## Coronavirus

Thank you to parents and pupils for taking lateral flow tests before returning to school. Please do so twice weekly until further notice. Test kits are available from the school office, and we will distribute to pupils regularly. Please note the most recent guidance regarding isolation but in summary; young people under 18 years 4 months can attend school provided they are well, have no viral symptoms and are returning negative lateral flow test results. Anyone returning a positive test at home should isolate immediately and follow government guidance. Pupils with a confirmed case of Corona Virus (LFD or PCR) should isolate for 10 days. However, if the pupil returns two consecutive negative LFD tests taken at least 24 hours apart with the first test no earlier than day 6 they may end isolation before the end of the 10-day period if they have no fever.

With high case numbers and transmission rates we are planning for both pupil and staff absence this term. Your child can expect to be directed to various physical and online resources which will support their learning in any circumstance but especially if they cannot attend school for a period due to illness or isolation. We may need to put measures in place to ensure continuity of learning; I ask for your understanding if this is required and support in ensuring that pupils attend school when they can to receive as much face-to-face teaching as possible. I will always respect parental decisions in this regard however.

## Senior Phase and Prelims

This is an important term for our Senior Phase pupils. Please note previous information regarding SQA exams and arrangements for prelims. We are currently working to SQA Scenario 1 and planning for traditional exams in school. We will be replicating these exams during our prelims to support pupils who we are aware have not experienced formal examinations. Pupils will be coached through the exam process and expectations. We plan to hold further course assessments toward the end of term.

These assessments provide important guidance to pupils as to their progress and areas for focus in their exam preparation. In the event of individual pupils not being able to sit an exam or if we move to SQA scenario 3 these assessments will form the basis of a pupil's grades. I have met with all senior pupils and impressed on them the importance of their prelims and all SQA assessments but will also ensure that pupils know of the support available to them and that they will not be disadvantaged through illness or being required to isolate.

Please contact the school as early as possible if a pupil will miss an assessment through illness or isolation. Please be reassured those pupils will be supported to sit their assessments upon their return.

During the January INSET days, school staff focussed on exam attainment and how to maximise our pupils' success. Stranraer Academy staff are committed to providing the best learning, resources, study support and guidance possible to support our pupils. We are confident that our young people will respond with diligence and maturity and reap their rewards as a result. I wish our pupils every success.

### **School Improvement Planning**

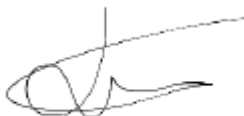
Our priorities this term will remain focussed on learning and teaching and behaviour and ethos. I plan to capture and share evaluations of learning and teaching with the school community.

Our successful focus on behaviour and ethos will continue. We will be looking closely at uniform (aware of covid mitigations such as open windows) and attendance in addition to our pupils' conduct. As always, I want to acknowledge that most of our pupils are immaculately presented and have only acceptable absence from school. I respectfully ask for your support in ensuring all pupils are following our uniform guidelines. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's Pupil Support teacher with any questions or concerns.

I will also begin planning for next year over the coming months, in line with the normal school improvement planning cycle. I plan to consult widely with pupils and parents and thank you in advance for engaging with consultation opportunities.

In conclusion, we have opened our doors (and windows) to our school community for a new term. We have caught up with friends, said "nice to see you", "how are you?" and "see you tomorrow". Already we have learned, laughed, and played together. We've done these things together as we will face our challenges and enjoy our successes together. I think being together is important right now. Thank you to everyone for being involved in and supporting our work and pupils.

Yours faithfully



Jamie Farquhar

Acting Headteacher