

Our Ref: JD/AH

26 March 2021

**TO: PARENTS/CARERS OF ALL  
PUPILS AT DUMFRIES ACADEMY**

**Education and Learning Directorate**

**Dumfries Academy**

Academy Street

Dumfries

DG1 1DD

Direct Dial 01387 274350

Pupil Absence Line 01387 274356

E-mail: [gw08officedumfriesac@ea.dumgal.sch.uk](mailto:gw08officedumfriesac@ea.dumgal.sch.uk)

Website: [www.dumfriesacademy.org](http://www.dumfriesacademy.org)

We have now completed two weeks of a blended approach for all our learners (some in-school learning and some remote learning). I want to congratulate our learners and their families of making it this far! We know it has not been easy to juggle family life with the demands of home schooling and, in many cases, home working for parents/carers.

I am writing to you at this stage to reassure you that we appreciate the continued anxiety and uncertainty you must be feeling during lockdown. The amount of communication from different sources can be very confusing. However, it is encouraging that we do have some dates to work towards.

### **Return to School for all Pupils**

It has now been confirmed that all pupils can return to school from the Monday 12 April. There will be a further update from Scottish Government on 6 April. A separate letter has been issued to all parents from Dr Gillian Bryson, Director of Skills, Education and Lifelong Learning outlining plans for pupils' return. However, as every school is different, it is important that you are aware of important information specific to Dumfries Academy to help ensure a safe return to school for our pupils and staff. In line with current risk assessments, rooms will be well ventilated, surfaces will be wiped down at the end of lessons and hand sanitiser will be available on entry to the building and to classrooms. Outdoor learning/social spaces are to be used where possible.

- All pupils must continue to wear face coverings in the building\* (except when eating)
- Ideally, pupils should arrive at school no earlier than 8.45am as they will not be admitted to the main building before this time.
- The café will be open from 8.00am for those who do arrive early and who wish to purchase breakfast items (these will be eaten either in the café or at our outside seating area, depending on the weather)
- All pupils will remain outside at break and lunch times, except when the weather is poor.
- Pupils may purchase food from the school café at morning break and lunch times but must then (except S1) use outside seating space.
- Pupils in S4-6 may go off site at break and lunch times. Pupils in S2-6 may go off site at lunch times only
- Any pupil in S4-6 wishing to remain in school for study periods will be allocated to a study room

\* We are updating our list of those pupils who are exempt from wearing a face covering. We require to have written confirmation from parents in respect of this, therefore can we please ask you to complete the form on this link <https://supportdg.dumgal.gov.uk/face-covering-exemptions> if you cannot access the link please send a note in with your child, on their return, with brief details of their reason for exemption.

### **School Uniform**

We have tried to be flexible given the current situation, where families may find that they have been experiencing financial hardship. We have also been mindful of the guidance around Physical Education and changing room facilities.

From 12 April pupils should wear full school uniform. However, pupils may come to school in PE kit on days when they have PE. This will be reviewed at the end of the first two weeks back and may change. If pupils have outgrown blazers, these can be ordered online at <https://www.academyuniformsltd.co.uk/>. If you require advice or support with school uniform items, please get in touch. Financial support with school clothing is available for those who are eligible at <https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/article/15246/School-clothing-grants>

### **Lateral Flow Testing**

We are delighted that so many of our S4-6 pupils have been participating in the lateral flow testing programme twice per week. Letters have now been issued to S1-3 pupils to encourage them to do the same. Test kits will be issued to S1-3 pupils week beginning 12 April on production of a signed consent form (already issued). We would also remind S4-6 pupils to continue to collect testing kits from the school office when required. We would encourage all pupils to take part in this programme to help keep our school safe and to allow learning to continue largely uninterrupted. All test results should be recorded online at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](http://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result) or by calling 0300 303 2713.

### **Remote Learning**

Pupils will no longer be expected to engage in remote learning. However, we have learned a lot from our remote model and will continue to post study materials and homework on Microsoft Teams. There may be individual situations when our pupils will be encouraged to use this remote learning model (e.g. if they are self-isolating due to Covid-19).

### **SQA Assessment and Timelines**

We have now produced a framework for SQA Assessment for senior pupils. This takes into account all recent advice and support materials from SQA. The framework and assessment timetable will be shared with pupils during Tutor Time on Monday 12 April and through Microsoft Teams. The first diet of assessments will take place week beginning 19 April and the second diet will take place week beginning 17 May. These assessments will provide the most up to date and accurate evidence for teachers to base their grades on. Please be aware that the process of awarding grades differs slightly from last year. As pupils are learning and completing work up to June, there is no inferred attainment. This means that the level the pupil is working at in June is the level that is awarded (no more headroom is built in for improvement).

During the Easter Break, it is expected that S4-6 pupils will study/revise for forthcoming assessments as they would normally do. Our staff have provided advice, support and resources to enable pupils to work at home during the Easter Break. Obviously, pupils must ensure that they achieve a balanced approach that supports both study routines and their own wellbeing.

We know parents and pupils will have many questions about assessment. We will make sure that we are clear about what is expected and when.

Below is a useful link to the Parent/Learner Blog on the SQA website for more information:

<https://blogs.sqa.org.uk/2021/>



## **Parental Reports/Parents' Meetings**

We have continually amended our cycle to reflect changing circumstances. Our S1 Parents' Meetings will take place via telephone on Monday 12 April.  
Our S4-6 Reports will be issued week beginning 10 May.

## **Health and Safety**

We would like to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to make school a safe environment for pupils and staff. We have recently updated risk assessments in light of the increasing numbers of pupils and staff attending school. There are also enhanced cleaning routines in place. We ask that you encourage your children to work with us to ensure a safe and healthy learning environment for all.

If your child is unwell or displaying any COVID-19 symptoms, please continue to follow NHS advice. If in doubt, do not send your child to school and inform the school, by telephone, of the reason for their absence and likely return date. Please ensure that, if advised to self-isolate, your child does not return to school before the end of the 10 day period.

Please see useful numbers/links below:

Public Health Phone Number: 01387 272724

NHS24 Phone Number: 111

NHS Website: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>

## **Family Health and Wellbeing**

We are mindful of the strain placed on families as lockdown continues. Not all families are sure of what support is available to them to support their mental and emotional wellbeing

Please see below links to useful information to help support parents/carers at this difficult time:

<https://www.place2be.org.uk/our-services/parents-and-carers/>

<https://clearyourhead.scot/>

<https://www.parentclub.scot>

Please continue to check our school app, your email and mobile devices prior to 12 April for any further updates for pupils returning to school on 12 April.

We wish you all a very pleasant and restful Easter Break.

Please continue to stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely

*Mrs J Dillon*

Joanne Dillon  
Headteacher.

