



Mearns Academy Plan B

Re-opening Contingency Plan (only to be used if a full return is not possible)

August 2020

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Introduction

The reopening of Mearns Academy to learners will follow the key guiding principles set out by Scottish Government.

1. Safe
2. Fair and Ethical
4. Clear
5. Realistic

The publication which key principles and future decisions will be based upon are set out in the document Coronavirus (COVID 19) : strategic framework for reopening schools and early learning and childcare provision which is available here :

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/excellent-equity-during-covid-19-pandemicstrategic-framework-reopening-schools-early-learning-childcare-provision-scotland/>

From August 2020 our approach will be a blend of in-school and distance learning for all young people. This will be kept under constant review and time spent in-school will be increased on a phased basis as and when it is **safe** to do so and national guidelines permit.

Within Mearns Academy we have been developing plans for a blended learning return to school for pupils in August taking the following factors into consideration:

- Number of pupils we can safely accommodate in the school at any one time, based on appropriate risk assessments and ensuring social distancing of 2 metres is in place
- Number of staff available to work in school bearing in mind that some members of staff will be shielding or unable to attend the school for health reasons
- The number of classrooms that are available and how many pupils can safely be in each classroom given social distancing guidelines
- Transport requirements for staff and young people
- Ensuring teachers have time to plan, deliver and provide feedback to pupils via Google Classroom to support blended learning.
- Teaching in smaller groups, with a degree of rotation / alternation.
- Where practicable, minimising the mixing of pupil groups.
- Staggered break and lunch times to minimise classes coming into contact where possible (particularly when indoors).
- Considering where it is practical for teachers, rather than pupils, to move round classes.
- Catering provision
- Enhanced hygiene practices

Timetable

Creating a workable timetable that balances all competing factors is a challenge that schools have never faced before and one in which compromise must be found. That said, the health and wellbeing of our learners and staff is paramount and any timetable solution will be designed from the point of view of “Safety over convenience”. It is accepted that this will at times bring challenges.

The 2020/21 timetable model will look and operate in a different manner to previously with:

1. Reduced transitions
 - Reduce face to face contact
 - Reduce corridor contact
 - Blended online learning
2. Staggered timings
 - Some learners leaving at lunchtime
3. Some courses initially available online only
4. Blended synchronous and asynchronous learning
5. Significantly smaller class sizes to allow safe social distancing in school
 - Increased number of staff required for delivery.
 - Increased number of rooms to accommodate pupils who are in school.
6. Reduced movement around the building.

Pupils will be informed of when their individual classes will run. As a guide Senior Phase will run one week and S1-S3 the following week.

Senior Phase –

Senior Phase will operate with 2 columns (or subjects) running per day (0900-1200 / 1230-1530). This will be flexible depending on subject requirements and numbers in the teaching group.

At this level of study, it is expected that further learning would be required at home.

Key Features:

- Maximum of 1 learning transition per day
- Uninterrupted and flexible learning timings
- Flexible deployment of staff
- Should a covid case be identified positively, simpler to track and trace contacts
- Reduced need to clean work areas within the day

S3 BGE

S3 will operate on a timetable up to 4 subjects per day. There is blended learning built into the timetable where some subjects would be delivered using digital technology.

Key Features:

- Maximum of 2 learning transition per day
- Should a covid case be identified positively, simpler to track and trace contacts
- Reduced need to clean work areas within the day

S1/2 BGE

Pupils in S1/2 will follow a core curriculum of – Literacy, Numeracy, Health & Wellbeing. This will be offered through a range of subjects which may include: Maths, English, Science, Social Subjects, Languages, RME, PSE, PE, Expressive Arts and Technologies. It will not be possible for young people to experience all curriculum areas.

Teaching Spaces

To allow larger groups of pupils to be taught while still observing social distancing guidelines a number of new teaching spaces have been introduced which include: Theatre, Library, Staff Room and Community Learning and Development Rooms. These will be used for certificate classes.

Young people in S1-S3 will be based in a “home room” and will remain for the majority of each day in the same teaching space. Teaching staff will rotate to offer a different learning experience for the young people.

Practical spaces pose additional challenges within current re-opening guidelines. Guidance for teachers who teach in practical spaces has been published (SSERC 2020) (DATA 2020) (CLEAPSS 2020a) (CLEAPSS 2020b).

Further information on this will be shared and discussed with relevant teams through their Faculty Heads and / or Health and Safety Committee in due course.



Blended Learning

Digital Learning

Google Classroom has been implemented successfully across a range of subjects since March 2020. It is important to note that as all teachers will now be teaching throughout the school day they will have less time allocated for supporting virtual learning in this way. Detailed expectations and resources will be issued by each subject.

During the school week when pupils are not in school they will be expected to:

- Engage with Google Classroom
- Continue work set by teachers
- Complete work prior to being in school (flipped learning)
- Ask for support when required
- Submit work via Google Classroom
- Pupils will also be signposted to remote learning that is being produced nationally to support the blended learning approach.

Bring Your Own Device

Currently public access to wifi at Mearns Academy is restricted to outside school hours. In order to have the service “switched on” then schools need to have completed the 360 safe programme. Mearns Academy have started the consultation process and further information will be issued.

Face to Face Video

Staff to learners: Education Scotland has worked with Google on changes to G suite which would allow learner cameras to be switched on without risk of unsupervised or unmoderated content. Google has recently implemented a number of technical changes which Education Scotland has tested and as a result they are in a position to switch on learner access to Google Meet, including video on an opt-in basis per local authority. This would be on a temporary basis until 30 September 2020 (the current end date for the free recording capability). Education Scotland will then re-assess risk / benefit, in consultation with users, before any extension is agreed.

It is Aberdeenshire Council's responsibility as data controllers to review and accept associated risks before opting in. They are now in the process of updating our remote learning guidance / protocols and producing a risk assessment to support interested schools / staff in anticipation of Google Meet being fully enabled to support the use of the updated service in the safest way possible. The on-boarding process, to enable Google Meet, can take two weeks once Education Scotland has received acceptance from Aberdeenshire.

Health & Safety

To enable Mearns Academy to open safely for all staff and young people we have considered the following:

- Limit the interaction between groups of students.
- Reduce the amount of furniture in each room and resources that need to be handled.
- Ensure handwashing is frequent using running water and soap or sanitiser.
- Ensure surfaces and equipment are regularly cleaned.
- Identify a ventilated room for anyone symptomatic to await collection.
- Ensure PPE is worn by supervising adults if students become symptomatic.
- Monitor and minimise the use of toilet facilities throughout the school day.
- Limit movement throughout the building
- Review transport including pick up and drop off points

Pupil should NOT attend school if the following applies:

- **They are displaying any of the COVID 19 symptoms (a high temperature, a new continuous cough, a loss or change in sense of smell or taste)**
- **They are required to self isolate for 14 days if a member of the household had tested positive or is displaying symptoms**
- **They are required to shield**
- **They have been contacted as part of the Test and Protect programme**

Protocols and procedures are in place should a pupil or member of staff become unwell and display COVID 19 symptoms while in school. These procedures follow Public Health guidelines.

Should this happen to a pupil parents will be contacted and asked to collect them from the school. For this reason, we ask that all parents/carers are always available to be contacted when pupils are in school and we have your up to date contact numbers.

Handwashing

Our expectation will be that everyone in the school building will wash their hands at regular intervals and use hand sanitiser. Hand sanitiser will be available on entering the building and pupils, staff and visitors will be expected to use this any time they enter or leave the building. Hand sanitiser will also be available in every classroom.

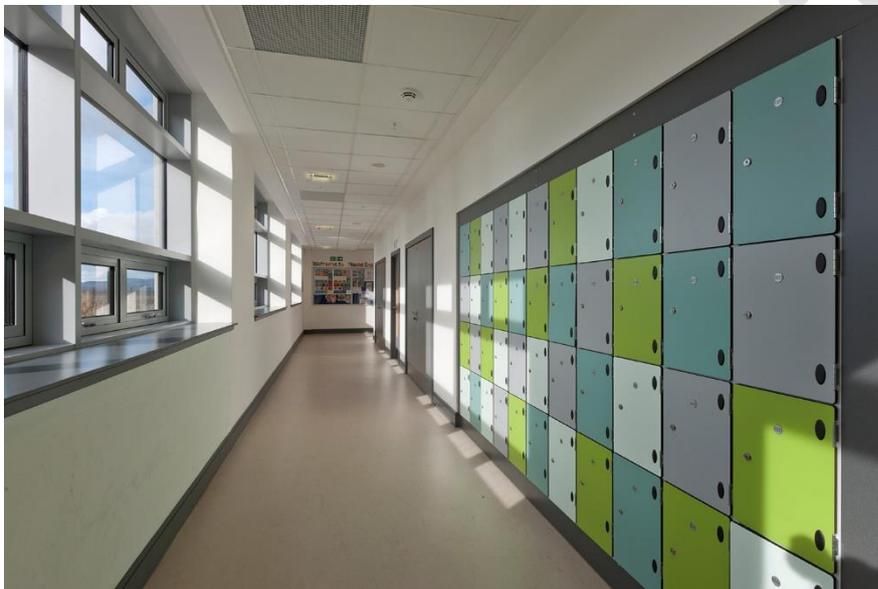
Equipment

Pupils should bring their own pencil case with all necessary equipment with them. Pencil case equipment should not be shared. Extra stationary has been purchased to avoid any young person or staff members sharing.

At the end of each period of learning and before moving to another area of the school all teachers and pupils will wipe down their work station or desk area. We will be providing the necessary equipment and materials for this.

Lockers

Lockers are not to be used during term 1 Aug-Oct. These will be taped off and unavailable for pupils. If a pupil has equipment in a locker they will be given an opportunity to empty it.



Uniform

We understand that we will need to be more flexible about uniform for a number of reasons. Throughout Term 1 (Aug-Oct) or until such time as there is a change in Scottish Government Guidance our uniform expectations will be relaxed. Pupils are expected to come to school in appropriate clothing. School uniform does not have to be worn. It is recommended that clothes are washed daily and the a pupil comes to school each day in different clothes or newly washed clothes.

This will be reviewed, and it is expected that our agreed uniform expectations will be re-instated following the October break.

Movement around school

- Timetabled movement around the school should be minimised.
- All non-essential movement around school should be avoided.
- Some areas of the school will become one-way.
- Some stairs will be strictly one way
- If groups of pupils are moving during lessons (e.g. for PE, DT lessons etc), staff should supervise and ensure that they use the shortest route possible.
- Corridor contact should be kept to a minimum but does lie under the Limited Exceptions

Lifts

Lifts should only be used by pupils and staff who have a clear reason for using them. Hand sanitiser will be available at the lifts and should be used before calling for the lift and entering the lift. In most cases only one person should be in a lift at any time. We will put individual plans in place for pupils who require support to access and use the lifts safely.

Toilets

We are finalising our procedures for access to toilets. The use of toilets will need to be tightly monitored to try and ensure social distancing as much as possible. Pupils should be aware that there may be a queue for toilets and that social distancing must be observed when waiting. A maximum of two people per toilet block facility at a time. All pupils should wash their hands and use hand sanitiser after using the toilet. We will put in place arrangements for those young people who will require immediate access to toilets due to medical conditions. We will share procedures for accessing toilets during the induction visits.

Our School Day

In order to avoid large numbers of pupils congregating and to ensure social distancing pupils should arrive at school from 0845-0900. Pupils should use the entrance closest to their first class of the day. We would ask that pupils do not arrive before this time.

On arrival at school pupils should wash hands, use hand sanitiser and go directly to their first period class. They should not hang around in the Atrium or wait for friends.

The new day will be split into 4 periods

Period 1	Period 2	Lunch	Period 3	Period 4
0900-1030	1030-1200	1230-1300	1230-1400	1400-1530

Morning break and afternoon breaks will be staggered.

If a pupil is late for school they should enter the school by the main campus door where they will be signed in. They should wash hands and use the hand sanitiser provided before going directly to class.

At the end of each period pupils should wait to be released by their teachers who will be ensuring pupils are released in a staggered manner to avoid any congestion in the corridors.

Canteen

Our canteen will continue to offer hot and cold options, this will however look very different. Food can be ordered for break snack or lunch via email or via an app. Food will then with be delivered to a teaching space for young people or there will be a grab and go area set up. Confirmation of this will be issued prior to August 12th.

- Pupils will have staggered break times.
- Pupils will go outside for breaks and maintain physical distancing.
- Pupils are only permitted to use the Dining Hall if purchasing food.
- Pupils will queue in compliance with social distancing guidance.
- Pupils are only to use designated seats in the Dining Hall. Once the Dining Hall seating is full, pupils will be directed to eat outside.
- Other than the Dining Hall, pupils are not permitted to be in the building during break time.
- All benches will be wiped down with disinfectant continuously before, during and after the break and lunch periods
- Pupils will queue in compliance with physical distancing guidance.
- Pupils will be asked to wash hands with soap/sanitiser before and after having lunch.
- The menu may be reduced to offer quick grab items.

Please note that all of the above is subject to further guidance from Aberdeenshire Council and discussions with the catering service.

Travel

We are awaiting further information on this from Aberdeenshire Council and will update this document in due course.

Pupils who are walking to and from school will be expected to social distance from other pupils not from their same household for as long as this remains the advice from the Scottish Government. Please also see the information above about the start of the school day.

Pupils who use public transport to get to school will be required to follow the latest Scottish Government safety guidance which may require the use of face coverings.

For parents who drop off their children by car we will develop a drop off system in the school car park. Please make sure you adhere to the signs to avoid increased interaction between pupils. After pupils have been dropped off, they are expected to maintain a 2 metre distance from those out with their household at all times.

Support for Pupils

We know that for some of our pupils, particularly some of our young people with additional support needs or who attend the Support Hub, there will be challenges in following the code of conduct and understanding some of the changes that will be in place in August. We will be putting in place individualised approaches and support for those pupils. For pupils who attend the Support Hub teachers will be talking to you and your children about what these will look like before the return in August. They will share how classes in the Hub will be structured, individual plans and when the children will be in school.

For other parents, if you think that there are aspects of the changes in August that your child may find difficult please email Mearns Academy.

We know that the lockdown experience will have been very different for every one of our pupils and our extended support team will be on hand to support our young people move forward and adjust to new routines and ways of working.

*All of the above will only be implemented as Plan B

*All of the above is subject to change