



Your Ref:

Our Ref: ES/SP

Contact: Eleanor Sheppard

Location: Marischal College

Dear Parent/Carer

Many of you will have seen the First Minister outline the measures being proposed for after Christmas. The move to Protection Level 4 on Boxing Day and changes to the start of term date will impact on you and I thought it would be helpful to outline the changes as we understand them at this time.

One of the most important changes at Protection Level 4 is the need to seek some assurance on the suitability of school attendance for those on the shielding list. We ask that parents/carers of children and young people who remain on the shielding list seek medical advice before the start of the new term. There have been some changes to the shielding list over the last few months and it would be greatly appreciated if you could make enquiries with your own clinician to determine if they are satisfied that your child should attend school buildings. Some children may be advised to not attend school in person and in these eventualities Google Classroom will be used to ensure that your child can continue to access their curriculum.

Staff will not be able to work across two different school settings whilst under Protection Level 4 measures so your child may experience some slight changes in staffing. School teams will work hard to ensure that your child's educational experience is not hampered by any necessary changes.

Physical education is only permitted out of doors at Protection Level 4 so please ensure that your child is suitably dressed. I would reassure you during periods of inclement weather local decisions will be made as to the suitability of outdoor Physical Education.

All young people and staff in the Senior Phase will be required to wear face coverings whilst in classrooms in addition to the wearing of face coverings in communal areas.

The First Minister outlined plans to extend the holiday period by one week for the majority of children and young people. As a result, only children and young people of essential key workers will be supported in school buildings between 5th to 8th January with all others enjoying 4 additional days of school holidays. We are unlikely to receive a national definition of 'essential key workers,' so will work with Community Planning Partners to agree a criterion to be used. I will write again with further information on how parents and carers can apply for key worker provision if they have no other means of accessing childcare from the 5th January in the very near future.

The term will begin for almost all children and young people on the 11th January but will be delivered remotely through Google Classroom. The length of this remote delivery has been provisionally set for a week but final decisions on the length of school building closure will be taken based on the prevalence of COVID-19 in the

New Year. Many families will require access to a chromebook and Wifi dongle to support their child to engage with their Google Classroom and I will write with information on how to access required resources soon. Please be assured that Aberdeen City Council has continued to invest heavily in chromebooks and we will be in a position to lend a chromebooks to all families who require one.

Many secondary schools had planned assessment weeks for early January and I know you will have concerns about the implications of remote learning on these plans. Please be assured that secondary HTs have worked exceptionally hard to get a provisional plan in place following the announcement that Higher and Advanced Higher exams would not take place. The schools have become somewhat expert in agility and plans will be amended to reflect this most recent change at the start of the New Year. We will share updated arrangements with you in the New Year.

I realise that as parents/carers you are seeking as much certainty as possible on what the start of the new term may look like and hope the information provided above will offer some reassurance. We anticipate some national guidance over the coming days and I will write again when in receipt of all of the information. In the meantime, please be assured that we have a team working on making the necessary preparations to ensure a smooth start to the new term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eleanor Sheppard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'E' and 'S'.

Eleanor Sheppard

Chief Education Officer