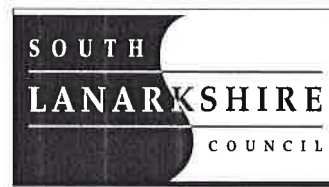




Hamilton Grammar School
Head Teacher: Graeme Sives



Education Resources
Executive Director Tony McDaid

Our Ref: GS/CC

Your Ref:

If calling- e/mail school office

E/Mail: office@hamilton.s-lanark.sch.uk

Date: 10 March 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

Phased return of pupils to school from 15 March 2021

I am writing to provide you with an update about our plans for the phased return of pupils to school and the return to in-person learning. Following the decision made by the Scottish Government on Tuesday March 2nd 2021, schools were asked to look at welcoming back more pupils from March 15th.

It is the Scottish Government's expectation that all secondary school pupils will be back in school on a full-time basis after the Easter holidays.

Prior to that, the phased return from March 15th will provide all pupils with the opportunity to attend for some face-to-face learning. We have considered the adaptations we need to make to maintain 2m distancing in classrooms during this phase of the return and to balance what we offer in terms of remote learning for our pupils. This includes:

- *making best use of the building and the space for pupils to ensure they adhere to the requirement for 2m physical distancing when inside the school building. (1m distancing on school transport);*
- *establishing routines for the safe entry and exit to the school building;*
- *minimising, wherever possible, the general flow of pupils around the school throughout the day; and*
- *following SG guidance of expectations relating to pupils wearing face coverings.*

Therefore, from Monday March 15th, all secondary pupils will receive a blend of remote learning and some in-school teaching. As is currently the case, senior phase students (S4-S6) who are taking national qualifications will have priority for face-to-face lessons in school. Furthermore, we will also continue to give school access each day to those senior students who require associated practical time and/or Prelim catch up time. Pupils in school should attend in uniform from this date.

Please note that as teachers will now have an in-school teaching commitment, remote learning will necessarily have less direct interaction and more recorded or self-directed activities during this period.

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Timetable

Pupils will be invited back into school on prearranged days/times to engage in specific learning. S5/6 has been split into cohorts of one third of the year group (5/6A, B or C) so that pupils can get their class teacher in the smaller, socially distanced classes. This also applies to S4. S1 and S2 come in half year groups (1A or 2B etc.) S3 comes as one block. The prioritisation of class teachers for the Senior Phase means that this is not possible for BGE.

Practical information about each of these groupings and classroom arrangements will be supplied via Google Classroom and Year Heads following this communication.

Week 1 March 15-19 in school timetable

	S5/6	S4	S3	S2	S1
Monday	5/6A	4A			1A
Tuesday	5/6B	4B			1B
Wednesday			S3	2A	
Thursday	5/6C	4C		2B	

Friday Intensive wellbeing work across all year groups led by Pupil Support and external agencies to support identified individuals, groups and families.
Prelim catch up and practical assessment senior pupils.

Week 2 March 22-26 in school timetable

	S5/6	S4	S3	S2	S1
Monday	S5/6B	4B			1A
Tuesday	S5/6 C	4C			1B
Wednesday			S3	2A	
Thursday	S5/6 A	4A		2B	

Friday Intensive wellbeing work across all year groups led by Pupil Support and external agencies to support identified individuals, groups and families.
Prelim catch up and practical assessment senior pupils.

Week 3 March 29- April 1 in school timetable

	S5/6	S4	S3	S2	S1
Monday	S5/6C	4C			1A
Tuesday	S5/6A	4A			1B
Wednesday			S3	2A	
Thursday	S5/6B	4B		2B	

Health and Safety

The school already has in place robust infection control measures such as enhanced cleaning regimes, access to hand sanitisers on entry and exit and within classrooms, the appropriate use of face coverings, 2m distancing between staff, and between staff and pupils where possible. In addition, as part of the phased return to school for senior phase pupils, **all** pupils in secondary school buildings will be expected to adhere to strict 2m physical distancing **at all times**. Families should note the changed position with regard to S1-3 pupils now also needing to wear a face covering in classes as well as in public areas.

We would like to remind pupils and parents of the need to follow all the relevant guidance and would also request a safety first approach on the way to and from school to reduce the risk of community transmission of the virus.

Pupils will be reminded about compliance with the existing safety procedures in place including the wearing of face coverings during classes, in busy communal areas within school and when visiting shops out with school grounds.

Lunch time Arrangements

To follow Govt. guidelines, pupils will be wearing a face covering from the moment they enter the school until they exit the building at Break or Lunch. That is quite a challenge. As such, we would encourage them to physically leave the building at these times for fresh air, regardless of weather, within common sense limits. They should wear suitably warm and waterproof clothing to school for this purpose. The school may be able to assist in this area. While there will be a full catering offer each day, there is no facility for eating or congregating in the Dining Hall itself due to the necessary distancing. Our usual designated Year Group eating areas will be in use as teaching spaces and so pupils should make their way to their p6 classroom if they have a packed lunch.

Those who choose to go offsite must follow the rules in place for wider society, for example wearing a face covering when entering a shop and respecting distancing measures. On return to school, pupils must adhere strictly to hand hygiene and infection control measures.

*Any pupils eligible for means tested free school meals will continue to receive payment.

Transport

From 15 March 2021 physical distancing of 1m applies on secondary school transport. This will significantly reduce the capacity of vehicles. Please also remember face coverings are required for all pupils on designated school and public transport.

ASN transport information will be shared on an individual basis. Our Whitelaw's coach will be running at around half capacity. We believe that this will accommodate our current model.

Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing

Our staff are currently taking part, along with pupils in S4-S6, in lateral testing. This involves taking a twice weekly at-home test through a lateral flow device (LFD). This is to help identify asymptomatic individuals at the earliest opportunity and to enhance the confidence of staff, pupils and families.

We encourage all staff and senior pupils to opt-in to the lateral testing programme although we do recognise this is voluntary. However, to take part a consent form must be completed. A video link on lateral testing is available for you to view:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLvaBZskxS7tzQYIVg7lwH5uxAD9UrSzGJ>

Around 200 senior pupils are already taking part in this development and we will offer kits to those over 16 and consent forms to those under 16.

At this stage we know that the Scottish Government have agreed this week that S1-3 pupils should now be included in the at-home asymptomatic testing offer after the Easter break. I will provide a further update on this before the Easter holidays, but it will mean pupils will be offered home-testing kits and your consent will be required.

Childcare Hub Provision

The Hub for identified vulnerable/key workers' children will continue to operate. Qualifying pupils should attend school hub as per current arrangements and attend face-to-face learning opportunities with their peers as timetabled. At all other times, this group will be kept separate from the larger group attending for face-to-face learning.

Physical Education

From March 15th, Physical Education will restart for limited groups of senior phase pupils under the following conditions:

- Outdoors
- Non-contact
- 2m Physically Distanced

This has been another unexpected challenge in a year of such tasks but we very much look forward to welcoming back our pupils on a phased basis and there will be more in the way of concrete detail on that via Google Classroom in the run up to Monday. We are well aware that, on any given day, a majority of pupils will be at home and we must try our best to balance these competing interests and deploy staff accordingly.

Your support and co-operation in helping us to work together to do this in a safe way is very much appreciated.

Yours sincerely



G Sives
Head Teacher