Date: 9 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that this update finds you and your family well at this difficult time. The challenges that we have all faced in recent months are entirely unprecedented and on behalf of all the staff of St Andrew’s, I would like to thank you for all the support and patience that you have shown. The welfare, both physical and mental health of our students, families and staff will continue to be the focus of the work of the school. Looking after yourselves comes first.

The Scottish Government has published their plans for re-opening schools and all our staff will be working together over the next few weeks to make sure that when we open in August that the safety of all children and staff will be our priority. We will follow all National and Local guidance to minimise the risk of infection for all users of our school building. As a result of social distancing, there will be a significant reduction in the numbers of students who can attend school.

The Director of Children’s Services, Steven Quinn, published a letter for all children, parents and carers last week. This letter can be found using the following link:

http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10302/Directors-message-to-parents-re-return-to-school-3-June

Also, he has produced an update video which is available here:

https://youtu.be/a2YwqKMSz3s

Home Learning Arrangements and Student Engagement

I would like to thank all the students, parents/carers and staff who have worked so hard to make learning at home possible. We will continue with our current arrangements until the end of term. We understand how difficult it is to balance learning at home with other demands such as childcare, parents working from home, limited access to IT, etc.

Our staff have collated information on levels of student engagement and many of our students have managed to engage with learning at home really well. However, some students seem to have not been able to engage with the learning provided by
staff. We are planning to send a text out to these families to see if there is anything we can do to support the students with their learning at home.

We would ask, if at all possible, that parents/carers get involved with their child’s learning and encourage them to complete the work that is set for them. When the school returns in August students will need to continue to learn from home and have a high degree of responsibility for their learning.

**P7 to S1 Transition**

Transitions are very important points in both a young person and their families’ lives. We were not able to conduct our P7 to S1 Transition Programme in our usual way, including the 2 day visit that should have taken place at the end of May but there has been much going on to support the S1 students who will be coming to St Andrew’s in August.

We have a dedicated section of our school website where transition information has been posted over the last few weeks.

[http://www.standrewspaisley.com/the-transition-zone.html](http://www.standrewspaisley.com/the-transition-zone.html)

The primary schools have been sharing this information with their families. It includes video welcomes to the school, introductions of key staff, video tours for S1, powerpoints with relevant information for P7’s, maps of the school, etc. This will continue to be developed.

Primary colleagues have shared information with our staff which has allowed us to make up the new S1 classes using friendship groupings. The primary schools will pass this information to their students very soon. There have been additional “virtual” meetings between primary staff and support staff in secondary for students with an additional support need or other needs that we should be considering for transition.

Some of our Primary Schools and their P7 students had already visited the school for a tour of the building. We will try and organise this, with suitable consideration given to safety and risk control, for the Primary Schools that did not have a chance to visit before lockdown. We will be contacting the primary schools to plan this. We will also invite students from non-associated primary schools as well.

We are confident that our new S1 students will settle very quickly when they join us, and all the staff are really looking forward to seeing them.

**S6 Leavers Mass and Prom**

Earlier in this letter, I reflected how important transitions are in our lives and this would also include our S6 students. S6’s last few days were certainly not what we would have wanted them to be or what this wonderful year group deserved. They have been a magnificent group of young people and have given so much to our school community. Our staff feel very proud to have been a part of your journey from child to adult and you should be very proud of all that you have achieved.
The S6 Prom had to be cancelled but if it is at all possible it would be great for us to get together to give you the send-off you fully deserved. At present we cannot say when this may be, but we will keep in touch with the Prom team to see what can be done.

We are planning on inviting our S6 to our last “Virtual” Assembly so would ask them to look out for the invite to their Glow account.

Our S6 Leavers’ Mass allows us to give thanks to God for all that our S6 have done and will go on to do. I am delighted to let you know that Bishop John will lead us in an online Mass that will bring together St Andrew’s with all our associated Primary schools to have an P7/S6 Leavers Mass. I will let you know when this will happen as soon as I have the date and time.

**SQA Examinations and Certification**

All departments and staff submitted their estimates for student performance to the SQA by 29 May 2020. SQA will deliver the results of this year’s qualifications on 4 August. The staff have taken great care and time over these estimates and we hope that students achieve what their hard work would have deserved. Any further update from the SQA on this year’s certification process will be communicated to parents.

**Trip Cancellation and Refunds**

All payments for cancelled trips will be refunded in full as soon as possible. We are currently working to make these arrangements and I will update you again as soon as I am able to confirm the exact details. I am sorry for any difficulties caused by the time taken for these refunds to be authorised and processed. I have been in separate communication with the students and parents of the Uganda 2020 Project and will confirm refund arrangements with this group. Thank you for your patience and support in the meantime.

**Returning to St Andrew’s in August**

When students return to the school in August, it will be in a blended learning model. This will mean that students will be in class on some days and supported to learn at home on other days. Social distancing means that it is impossible to have the numbers of students in the school that we would normally have. The numbers in each classroom will be significantly smaller to enact social distancing guidance. All the secondary schools are working together to develop a model that works best to support our students and staff to learn in an effective and safe manner.

I will update you with further information on how this will work before the end of June to allow you as much time as possible to prepare for these new arrangements.
Uniform for August

We are planning for students to wear, as far as is possible, school uniform when we return in August. Our uniform gives a sense of school identity and community. It also helps with school security and, with a change in the model for students attending school, this is just as important as ever. We are not asking parents to make special journeys to shops at this time but as Scotland moves onto the next phases of the road map it should become easier for us to do so. At a recent meeting of the Renfrewshire Secondary Headteachers there was agreement about the wearing of school uniform. Please note that there is no expectation for students to buy blazers.

Our uniform consists of:

- Black trousers/skirts (leggings/jeans are not to be worn to school)
- Black jumper (no hoodies, or jumper with logos)
- White shirt
- Black coats/jackets
- All black shoes (no brightly coloured shoes or trainers)
- School tie (some students may be given a tie by their primary schools and we will try to have a stock available in the school come August)
- Leather or denim jackets are not part of our dress code and should not be worn.

Renfrewshire Council offers a clothing grant to assist parent/carers with the purchase of clothing and footwear for school. Applications can be submitted once a year online via the Renfrewshire Council website at

http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/freeschoolmealsandclothinggrants

Thank you once again for all your support and hard work in recent weeks. I will provide an update before the end of term on the plans for August but in the meantime, I wish you and all your families every best regard at this time.

Take care and God Bless.

Kevin Henry
Head Teacher