

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you and those close to you had a pleasant break, and we wish you all a Happy New Year.

With the continuing impact of the COVID-19 situation affecting staff absence, we have been closely monitoring the availability of staff to return to work after the break. Although as you might expect, staff absence is at a higher than usual level, we plan to be fully open for all year groups as we begin the new term tomorrow, Wednesday 5th January 2022. We will continue to make arrangements in school to accommodate all our young people, although pupils should expect there to be 'cover' teachers in some lessons, and potentially changes in where lessons take place too.

We are also mindful of how our young people and parents/carers may be feeling over the return to school this term, given the high prevalence of COVID-19. To provide reassurance, throughout this situation we have been impressed with the commitment of young people to following the in-school mitigations. The support of parents/carers in encouraging young people in this regard is appreciated. At the end of last term, we issued to parents/carers, a summary of points young people should be aware of when returning to school. These are noted again below, to support conversations taking place between parents/carers and pupils in advance of the return to school.

- Do not come to school if you have COVID-19 symptoms
- Wear school uniform, including a blazer
- Warmer clothing can also be worn in classes given that ventilating classrooms can reduce temperatures in learning spaces
- Bring a face covering
- Come prepared for learning with any books, equipment, jotters, pens etc you may need
- You will get to do practical activity in your practical subjects
- Maintain physical distancing from all adults
- S1-3 pupils will have different lunches and interval from S4-6 pupils
- Sanitise or wash your hands at every opportunity
- Participate in the Lateral Flow COVID-19 testing, at least twice per week
- Try to remain outside as much as possible
- If go to a shop or takeaway at lunchtime, you need to follow their rules
- Follow the one way system and signage

Crucially, pupils should be taking a Lateral Flow Test either today, or first thing tomorrow, before attending school.

We look forward to seeing our pupils back in school tomorrow. Undoubtedly, there will be challenges ahead for the Braes High School community. However, the strong partnership between pupils, parents/carers and staff has served us well throughout this situation and will continue to do so in the term ahead.

As always, if you have any queries regarding your young person's education, please do not hesitate to contact the relevant Pastoral Head.

Yours faithfully,

Iain Livingstone