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(JD/KL)

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Dear Parent/Carer

Update: Statement by Depute First Minister on Education Recovery, 23/06/20

Yesterday I wrote to you as requested by the local authority to provide you with details of plans for return to school in August. This communication also fell within a larger timeline for planning set out by the Scottish Government which included scrutiny of local authority plans by government education inspectors.

The plans for Breadalbane Academy, like all schools, were based upon guidance provided by the Scottish Government on 28th May. This guidance was very detailed, but a principle planning assumption was that pupils would require to be kept at least two metres apart whilst in classrooms and other spaces:

The 2m rule should be used when determining how many people are permitted to be in a space. In any defined learning space, there should be sufficient floor area to allow for 2m separation between all individuals (including all types of staff and learners of all ages).

Coronavirus (COVID-19): re-opening schools guidance

Until today, this was the guidance that our school and all others were using to create a plan for blended learning in August. Given this requirement for physical distancing, few schools were able to plan for classes at the usual maximum, with the result that almost all had to plan for some form of **part-time** provision.

However, you may now be aware that John Swinney informed the Scottish Parliament this afternoon that the government's planning assumptions had now changed. He stated that:

*If we stay on track, if we all continue to do what is right, and if we can further suppress this terrible virus, the Government believes that we should prepare for children to be able to return to school **full time** in August.*

He did go on to say that existing plans – which he now described as 'contingency' plans - may still be required:

While the outlook is more positive now, there are no certainties with this virus. If there is an increase in infection rates, if there are outbreaks that require action to control, then this contingency plan could still be required. ...All the work that has gone in to preparing blended learning models for every locality across the country has been essential preparation. It is vital that we have these models ready if we need them because we may need to turn to them.



I take this to mean that what so far has been our 'plan A' for August – which I shared with you yesterday - is now to be a contingency 'plan B'. However, many questions remain about exactly what schools should now be planning for – particularly as there has been no formal announcement of the easing of physical distancing rules in schools or anywhere else in Scotland. I will now be seeking clarification from the local authority as to what I should be asking staff to plan for in August, and no doubt the national and local picture will become clearer over the next few days.

When I know more, you can be sure that I will update you further. In the meantime, I would ask that you bear with me, during what I appreciate must be a frustrating time for parents.

Yours faithfully



John Devine
Headteacher