



STRATHALLAN
SCHOOL

Opportunities for *all* to excel



Returning to Strathallan

Your Questions Answered

Where health and wellbeing come first

Returning to Strathallan in September 2020

As we come to the end of our summer holidays, we are excited to welcome back all our pupils to school in September. Strathallan is working towards a full return for both boarding and day pupils, with appropriate contingencies in place to ensure the health and wellbeing of every one of our pupils and staff. This document sets out an overview of our plans as they for this return stand, but is by no means comprehensive or immovable: we will be adapting to changes in guidance and policy as they arise.

We are fortunate that our 153-acre campus, rural location and spacious facilities give us a head start when planning proper social distancing measures, and that the technological provision offered by our remote learning platform Strath Worldwide allows even more flexibility of learning. We were among the first schools to sign up to the BSA's COVID-Safe Charter, and these principles are at the heart of all our planning.

I want to take this opportunity to reassure you that we are taking every available measure to ensure Strathallan remains a safe, healthy and happy place for everyone. I very much look forward to seeing you all back at school, and to welcoming the many new pupils who will be joining us at Forgandenny for the first time.



Mr Mark Lauder, Headmaster



What happens if my child contracts Covid-19?

Parents will be informed by the Health Centre or housemaster/mistress in the first instance that we suspect an issue and that we are arranging a test. Pupils at that stage will be self-isolating in their rooms (Day pupils will have to be taken home or should not be brought in to school if symptoms appear at home). Lessons and other online activities can continue while we await any outcomes. If a boarder tests positive, parents will be informed immediately and our medical staff will speak to them and give guidance on what the clinical position is and how the pupil is as well as what treatment if any is required. If a boarder cannot return to family – and this could be for a wide range of reasons – they will be required to move to a Covid-19 ward in our own Health Centre for recovery, even if they do not require hospitalisation. This has access to television, DVDs, the internet and online lessons and has dedicated facilities, washrooms and showers – it does not require a pupil admitted for this reason to be ‘in bed’ but it does require isolation. Staff conducting regular clinical assessments to monitor recovery will do so in PPE equipment and meals will be provided to the pupil in disposable containers. During what could be a worrying time for the young person, we will be providing pastoral support throughout as well as encouragement and reassurance from school staff who are known and connected to the pupil via online chats and distanced meetings.

The Health Centre at this stage will relocate to a new location for normal medical cover and support for other pupils as normal. Once the clinical advice is received that a pupil in our care who has recovered from coronavirus is fit and safe to return to house, they shall be allowed to do so and resume normal routines. While in the Health Centre, staff in attendance will be required to wear full PPE equipment, no visits in person from friends will be allowed for obvious reasons (though online meet ups will be encouraged) and online lesson and work can continue. Once the health centre has received a deep clean – which takes three days – the Health Centre can then reopen as normal.

If a child's health deteriorates while in the health centre, then admission to hospital would likely follow, as it would in other circumstances too. Parents would be kept informed regularly and frequently throughout any of these steps and regular communication with your child would be facilitated. It is hoped that we will avoid this, but parents should be reassured that we are prepared for this eventuality and in a way that protects individuals as well as the community as a whole. Those who have been in contact with any positive case will be required to self-isolate at home or in school as directed by clinical advice and our timetable has been designed to allow this to happen with minimal disruption to lessons via online access to classes.

How will you monitor every child's health every day?

There are three key steps in terms of monitoring boarders' health and four for day pupils. All pupils on campus will have their temperature taken every morning; they will have to answer a set of questions each morning relating to where they have been and who they have been with if outside of their house/family unit and so forth. These questions form an important part of 'tracing' potential exposure to coronavirus and we will work via our Health Centre on taking any action if required. These will form part of the daily registration records. Where temperature levels are up or where there is an answer to a question that raises concern, pupils will be delayed from participating in normal routine until such time as we are clear that there is no risk to them or others. The third monitoring stand will be more normal, in terms of conversations, encouraging symptoms to be reported and so on. Much as a parent would at home in terms of care and oversight.

The fourth step for day pupils is parental communication – pupils who feel unwell overnight or at weekends while at home should not return to school if their symptoms are potentially linked to coronavirus – and the NHS Inform service can advise on this and should be used. Parents should inform the school immediately if there is any concern to allow us to take steps here to assess the potential impact and take the necessary steps to protect others.

Can boarders and day pupils mix?

Yes, under current guidelines. Please note that we will have social distancing in operation, that pupils will be inducted about coming to school in a Covid world which will include how to behave, interact and maintain safe behaviour and personal hygiene. If this is followed well, risk is significantly reduced.

So lessons and activities will be integrated. Access to each other's rooms in house however will be limited as will social areas in house. Where anyone shows symptoms connected potentially to coronavirus, then these restrictions we will have in place will allow the management of the checks - and isolation required until checks are carried out - to be more effective and swift, minimising both risk and disruption.

Do pupils have to wear masks – do they need to bring them?

In Scotland, there is no mandatory wearing of face masks in all situations, only some (shops, public transport, libraries and so on). Masks will be allowed for staff and pupils of course and while these are not required when outside, masks are more likely to be worn inside and in enclosed spaces when social distancing is less than two metres (please note there is no official requirement for pupils to socially distance but there will be appropriate social distancing measures at Strathallan despite this). Staff are likely to wear masks in some situations but where there is good ventilation, alongside rigorous hygiene practices as well as social distancing, teaching will not require masks to be worn. In one to one situations, such as subject clinics or tutoring, masks are more likely to be worn even when social distancing is being observed.

Pupils can bring masks – and this will be recommended. We are also providing one washable Strathallan Mask to each pupil on their return and these require naming along with any other washable masks. Additional masks are available to purchase from the shop for £3.50 and can be added to the school bill if ordered in advance too.

While disposable one-use masks can also be used, we are discouraging these for environmental reasons unless they are used in emergencies or when washable masks are forgotten, misplaced or needing washed. Three masks would seem sensible – one to wear, one to wash and one spare. When masks are washed in house for boarders, hygiene protocols will be followed to ensure that masks remain clean. A small supply of disposable masks for boarders would also be sensible in case washable masks are lost or unwearable for any reason.

Under no circumstances should masks be shared. The school will have spare masks of both kinds and pupils will be able to be protected. Charges will be levied for replacement washable masks and for repeated requirement for any disposable masks – occasional forgetfulness and one-off issues will not incur a charge.

Assemblies and Chapels, when they start, will have masks on and there will be no singing until further notice – an activity that expels moisture particles further than normal speech and interaction. It will be some time before the whole school reassembles in Chapel therefore and assemblies and Chapels will be for smaller sections of the school where social distancing can be observed, regardless of the official guidance to dispense with any social distancing for pupils.

Will staff looking after self-isolating (quarantine) pupils be mixing with pre-season etc?

All staff involved with pupils self-isolating will have to observe the safest standard of social distancing, the use of masks and other PPE and all other safety requirements. Staff involved are not themselves part or inside the 'bubbles' for self-isolating pupils and will have to maintain a clear distance and use all safety measures to protect themselves and therefore others. If this is in any way compromised, NHS advice would be for staff to then self-isolate and this would therefore happen. Residential staff looking after self-isolating pupils will NOT be involved in pre-season training until the period of self-isolation is successfully completed.

With access to increased facilities for hand hygiene, additional cleaning regimes and ongoing training and reminders about good hygiene protocols, pupils will be well versed in COVID-safe practices. Movement around the school site will also be minimised.

What are the cleaning procedures in common areas?

A significantly increased cleaning and sanitising regime has been put in place to ensure the highest practicable standards of cleanliness are achieved throughout the school in order to reduce the risk of Covid-19. All high traffic and public areas of the school will be fully sanitised twice per day, with particular attention paid to "touch points" using a chlorine solution in excess of 800PPM (parts per million) as recommended by the UK Government. A full breakdown of our Domestic procedures is available on request.

How will children interact in houses, classrooms, dining hall and sports?

For the most part normally, but horseplay, tactile behaviour and other forms of contact will be discouraged. Social distancing will allow real time interaction. In sport, guidelines by National governing bodies of different sports will be followed and these are quite strict as you will imagine, especially in contact sports. At the time of writing, it is envisaged that, barring localised spikes in virus cases, fixtures will return. So up to half term, house fixtures and some summer sports will be played as well as training for autumn term sports fixtures due to resume after half term as things currently stand.

Will pupils have to socially distance at meal times?

Yes. Tables of six instead of eight are being planned and staff will not share the dining hall unless they are teaching staff on duty. Meal times have been extended and sitting will be arranged (in rotation for fairness) to manage this. Queuing in particular is being reduced. Cleaning between sittings also has been factored in. There will be no self-service to avoid 'touching' of utensils. Catering staff will be wearing PPE and will observe strict hygiene protocols in preparation and serving food as well as in dishwashing and cleaning cutlery.

How will you make the Covid-19 restrictions less overbearing?

There are three parts to managing this issue. The first is that the relief at being back at school and with others will in itself be exciting but that we will start from the outset instilling

good practice and behaviours to ensure pupils are clear and come back starting as we mean to continue. This will to a degree normalise things – or at least 'new normalise' things. Secondly, by being very clear on the issues being faced and how they are to be managed and allowing pupils to ask questions, make suggestions and develop a clear understanding will go a long way towards compliance in a measured way and not via heavy-handed insistence or overly dramatising the issues, both of which increase different types of anxiety. This will be led by pupils in particular – house and school prefects in both the senior and prep schools, which helps prevent an adult-driven approach that can feel too heavy at times for some pupils. Thirdly, as and when it is appropriate and safe to do so, easing some restrictions as a reward for good campus, hygiene and behaviour management. Also through praise, recognising good behaviour and rewarding and encouraging those who are working well within the guidelines.



Advice for International pupils

International pupil return dates and plans for quarantine?

International pupils are returning from 16 August. They will be met at the airport by a member of staff and escorted to their transport. All transport will follow current guidelines. On arrival at School they will be met and helped settle into their accommodation. Until term starts we will have three houses open – one for those that need to self-isolate and two for those that don't. For this period all rules and regulations regarding covid-19 will be strictly adhered to. Throughout the day there will be an academic activity programme along with the opportunity for extra-curricular activities. New students will also have the opportunity to finalise uniform and IT issues. Elements of the programme may well be online depending on the group the student finds themselves in – self-isolating or not. Full catering will be provided and staff will be on hand to provide pastoral support as well as running the activities.

Will every international pupil have to self-isolate (quarantine)?

No. Only those who are required to.

Do pupils from the UK pose more of a risk than internationals?

Broad risk assessments by nationalities are not particularly helpful. In the end, the only issue is potential exposure to the virus in the days leading up to a return to school and then thereafter in trips out from school as and when they are permissible and day pupils travelling between home and school. So the questionnaires and daily checks are our ways around this, as are self-isolation arrangements, including how these may change and potentially increase, as we have seen recently concerning a number of European countries. So from the UK, recent trips visits and holidays will be important to understand and these issues will be checked as part of the return to school. No pupils should be here unless prearranged self-isolation is needed and completed or any self-isolation after travel (including holidays by day pupils) or if contacted to do so by the NHS is completed successfully.

Will children be given time to resetttle and adjust without the pressure of academic work immediately?

Yes – this is important to recognise. We will have to have a learning and re-learning phase in the first few weeks of term – new pupils have to do this every year in any case but this year the whole school will. So in terms of easing pupils back in, we will be mindful of not ‘crowding them at a high fence’ in the first few weeks. Communication both ways and with parents will be essential in judging this and feedback from pastoral staff to academic staff (though these are the same people overall!) will be key it getting a sense of what the right pace will be and how to pick this up appropriately. The same applies to sport and fitness it should be noted.

Online learning and catching up

Will staff follow up the online learning experience with all pupils as some parents feel their children have fallen behind?

Yes. This will be part of a return to school process that will recognise that pupils have been out of school for six months and will check what lessons were accessed or not. Individual learning plans will then be drawn up and acted upon. Eachers and Tutors will manage this process and Housemaster/mistresses will oversee this. Given that the school has over 140 new pupils joining, this is normal practice each new year. However, this year the process will have to apply to all pupils. This will take time and I would expect this process to be completed ahead of the first form orders. Practical tasks are already identified as an area that all pupils need time to develop on their return.

Will firefly for parents remain so they can see their pupils homework marks etc?

Yes.

Will the online option continue for pupils who have to miss school?

Yes. The new timetable for next year has been modelled to allow both real and virtual attendance in lessons.

Plans for Riley House (Prep School)

What are the living arrangements in Riley House?

The Riley House boarders will reside in dorms where they will be encouraged to respect each other's space and to maintain personal hygiene. Each dorm will have access to toilet and shower facilities, which will be cleaned regularly by the Riley domestic staff. They also have access to a kitchen, as well as the common areas, and the house.

During the school day, which starts at 8am, under current guidelines boarders and day pupils can mix, but to start with we will be observing the safest standard of social distancing and each year group has been allocated an area in The Prep School, as well as the paddock.

Going back to Sport

What are the plans for playing sports?

From September, we are going to offer a mixture of autumn term sports (Girls Hockey & Boys Rugby) and summer term sports (Tennis, Athletics & Cricket) during games sessions. We hope to run these up until the end of September or till half term dependent on when autumn term fixtures will be returning.

We are currently unable to offer any indoor sport, but will follow Government and national governing body guidance as to when we are. More information will follow in the Covid sports booklet.

How will you get the children fit again?

Steadily, and they should be exercising now at home – running, cycling, fitness sessions etc. and eating healthily. Guidance will be forthcoming from the Director Sport in due course which will give clearer guidance as well as information on pre-season training that will be available. Getting match fit will be a factor in the first few weeks of games sessions and PE for pupils and this is something that will go alongside the guidance from individual sports governing bodies.



Useful information and articles

[BSA COVID-Safe Charter](#)

[NHS Inform's COVID-I9 guidance](#)

[Parentclub Scotland's Coronavirus Information Page](#)

[Health Protection Scotland's Guidance for Residential Care Settings](#)

[UK Government's guidance on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#)

[Scottish Government's Schools Policies](#)

[PKC's Coronavirus: Schools, children and families](#)



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