



New Machar School Newsletter

October 2020



Our School Values

Achieve

Include

Motivate

Our School Motto:

#beyourbestself

Dear Parent/Carer,

I would like to thank you all for your support during Term 1. It is hard to believe that we have come to end of Term 1 already. Although it's been a very different term indeed, many of the change we have been required to implement, due to COVID restrictions, have worked very well in school and it is out intention, as we move into Term 2, to keep many of the current arrangements we have in place as they are.

Mr B Carle, Head Teacher

Looking Back Over Term 1

Firstly, I must pay credit to our pupils, for the way they have effortlessly adapted to and embraced the new procedures and systems we have in place at New Machar to ensure everyone's safety. It has been delightful to hear a buzz once again as I walk around school and hear the laughter and evidence of learning taking place in all our classrooms. Children are very resilient and have returned to school to school without many problems at all.

Secondly, thanks to our parent community for the way you have worked alongside us as we have made our changes to morning, lunchtime and after school procedures. Without your cooperation and support, we would not have been able to implement these changes as successfully as we have.

Finally, thank must also go to the hardworking staff team at New Machar, who have puled out all the stops to ensure their classes remain the stimulating learning environments they need to be, again whilst ensuring appropriate safety and hygiene procedures are in operation.

I a so very grateful for the amazing pupils, parent body and staff team here at New Machar. You have all truly been your best selves.

Moving Forward into Term 2

These continue to be very difficult times, shrouded in uncertainty about what the future holds. Given the current growing numbers of COVID-19 cases not oly nationally but globally, it is still important that all of us in the school and wider community continue to adhere to the advice minimising possible spread of the infection.

For that reason, no children who are displaying any symptoms or are in anyway in contact with households who may be directly affected by the virus should attend school, and families should follow the national advice around isolation. Should a child have to isolate for an extend period of time then work can be provided through Seesaw/Google Classroom.

The wearing of face coverings still remain optional for staff and pupils although there are circumstances when the wearing of face coverings will be necessary (in line with our Risk Assessment).

Arrival and Leaving School

Our procedures for children arriving and leaving school seem to be working well. We kindly ask that parents/carers, where possible, only arrive 5-10 minutes before the start of the day. Please adhere to our playground markings when waiting with your child. We also ask that parents/carers do not encourage their child to play in the playground in the mornings - part of our Risk Assessment is to ensure children do not mix with other classes/year groups. This is mainly to protect staff and for track and trace purposes. We completely understand that this is confusing for children as they can mix with their friends after school, however we would encourage you to explain that these safety measures are in place for a reason.

We also kindly ask that P3 pupils do not play/run behind the Portacabin classes in the morning. This seems to have increased in recent weeks and despite our best efforts to remind children, we still have large numbers of children from different classes mixing whilst waiting for the bell to ring.

Playtimes

As per Scottish Government Guidance, we shall continue to stagger our playtimes, to enable us to keep groups of pupils gathering to a manageable number. We have a number of protocols in place to deal with different weather types - all pupils are familiar with this, however will be supported by staff to ensure they understand them.

School Dinners

As advised earlier in the term, lunches are now being served in the hall with the exception of P6-P7 pupils who remain in their classroom. Again, this arrangement is working well and will continue after the October break. Custard/Soup will not be served during Term 2 - again, similar to current procedures from Term 2.

School Resources

Pupils may take a school bag with them to school. They may also bring a pencil case and their own writing utensils to school. These will be for their own personal use and will remain in school at all times.

Water bottles should also continue to be brought to school. Children are not permitted to drink out of the water fountains, however are permitted to refill water bottles.

Clothing

The majority of our pupils have been very well presented with their school uniform since returning to school and I am delighted to share almost all our pupils are wearing school uniform on days where there is no PE.

Your child's class teacher will make you aware of which days PE or any outdoor learning will be taking place during Term 2. On these days the appropriate clothing (not school uniform), may be worn. I

would like to emphasize however that, at the moment, PE still needs to be taken outdoors (due to Scottish Government advice). It is therefore vital that pupils are dressed appropriately on these days e.g. school sweatshirt worn on top of perhaps more casual bottoms.

Learning, or indeed PE, may still take place outdoors on days which are not "official PE days" and pupils will be outdoors at playtimes and lunchtimes unless it is very wet or windy. It is really important that, as winter approaches, pupils have appropriate outerwear for inclement weather.

Opportunities for Dialogue with Staff

Under normal circumstances opportunities for dialogue with staff would often present themselves at the school door at the beginning or end of the pupil day. Unfortunately, this continues not to be possible for the time being. We will be issuing interim report cards towards the end of Term 2 to provide you with an update on your child's progress since returning to school.

Unfortunately, parents are still not allowed to access the school building unless in an emergency. Please note also that we need to continue to minimise the handling in of forgotten snacks/lunches to the office as this could very easily be a source of spreading the infection. We would therefore request that parents ensure their children come to school prepared and organised for the day ahead.

All pupils are expected to enter school via their allocated doors and should not be taken to the front door by a parent/carer unless prior notification has been given to the school. Pupils should arrive to school on time. If a pupil is late on more than 5 occasions, relevant action will be taken in line with our school policy regarding late attendance.

Residential Trips

During Term 2, we would normally be finalising our residential trips for our P6 and P7 pupils. Unfortunately, it is very unlikely these will go ahead. Any school trips will be local and will consider all risks involved before organising. For P6 pupils, arrangements are being considered in terms of providing them with a Skiing Trip when they are in P7. We will keep all parents/carers updated.

Christmas

Christmas at New Machar School is usually such a wonderful time, involving the whole family and wider community. Unfortunately, our annual Christmas Family Event and Whole School performance will not be going ahead this year. However, we are not letting anything dampen our spirits - arrangements are already in place to provide an alternative Christmas experience for our friends and family. More information will be provided during Term 2.

Staffing

Mrs Mary Shand, Early Year Practitioner will not be returning to her post following her maternity leave. We wish Mrs Shand all the very best for the future and thank her for her commitment during her time with us. Miss Amy Bell will remain in this post on a permanent basis.

Recent additional Scottish Government Funding has allowed the Inverurie Cluster to appoint a number of additional teachers to support our return to school. I am delighted to share that Miss Hopper will be re-joining our school after October. Her remit will focus on Outdoor Learning, Health and

Wellbeing and Nurture. Miss Hopper will work with us for 2-3 days per week. More information relating to Miss Hopper's role will be provided during Term 2.

Adverse Weather Arrangements

As we approach the winter months, it is important that you keep up to date with the procedures of Adverse Weather. In the event of adverse weather, information regarding school closure/partial closure/changes to school transport arrangements can be found on the website below or by dialling the Aberdeenshire Information Line (number noted below). **Please note:** You will need to enter the New Machar Pin Number to hear information on the Aberdeenshire Information Line. We will also update parents on both our Facebook and Twitter social media pages as well as through Groupcall messaging as soon as we possibly can. Please note that if school transport is not operating in the morning, this status will remain the same for the entire day. It is then parental choice if you would like to drop/pick up your child if transport is not running. Please only do this if it is safe to do so.

Aberdeenshire Council Website: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/closures

Aberdeenshire Information Line: 0370 054 4999

New Machar Pin number: 022330

Parking

We continue to be concerned about some of the parking during drop off/pick up times. Despite numerous pleas asking parents/carers to be mindful of where they park, we still witness cars being parked on corners/pavements, making it extremely dangerous for our pupils as they enter/leave school. We have recently implemented parking restrictions beside the visitor car park to prevent cars from parking on the grassed areas. Mrs Duncan and Mr Moir will continue to traffic the car park, allowing only a small number of vehicles to enter the car park.

Dates for the Diary

Monday 26th October - Term 2 begins

Friday 20th November - In-Service day - school closed

Friday 18th December - End of Term 2

School Website

Please continue to check our school website for important information and helpful documents.

<http://newmachar.aberdeenshire.sch.uk>

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a pleasant break with your families and look forward to seeing all our pupils back with us on Monday 26th October.

Kind regards,

Brian Carle

Mr B Carle

Head Teacher