



Braidburn School Parent Council

31 August 2020

Head Teacher's Report

General News

Return To school – Our children, young people and staff have returned to school after almost 5 months away from our building. The plans that underpin our return to school have been developed in line with Scottish Government advice on reopening of schools; and all that we do to implement these plans is guided by the most up to date Health Protection information. 'Phase One' of our Renewal planning has supported the implementation of a suitable model for learners returning to school – with the focus primarily on Health & Safety and Transitions. Looking forward, 'Phase Two' of our planning will focus on Health, Wellbeing and Resilience, Teaching, Learning and Assessment (including Digital and Outdoors) and Equity & Inclusion. Our 'Phase Two' plans are due to be submitted in October, in line with Local Authority guidance.

Partnership working with Active Schools – Our team will be working in partnership with 'Active Schools' co-ordinator, Jill Coleman, as part of promoting physical activity during the first phase of our return to school. Support from Active Schools will be in place until the October break, in the first instance, and Jill will work with class teams to support children and young people across Primary and Secondary, working in one bubble per day.

The Yard – Routine offsite activities are not currently taking place, but through discussion with our Quality Improvement Manager, I am delighted to have been allocated two 'slots' each week at The Yard until the October break for targeted learners in our Primary department.

Play Therapist – Our successful partnership with Lisa Bywater, Play Therapist, will continue into session 2020/21. Lisa cannot currently deliver her service within our building, however, and she will continue to support targeted children and families remotely until guidance regarding school visits is reviewed.

Family Support Workers – As part of our Pupil Equity Funding plan for this session, we have engaged the support of two 'Family Support' workers. Celia Koukou and Gabrielle Podvoiskis will be making contact via email / letter with all our families in the next few days. Celia and Gabrielle will aim to create a 'Braidburn Family Network' and will offer a range of supports to our Braidburn families.



George Watson's College Music Therapy – George Watson's College remain keen to offer Music Therapy for targeted learners; through offering weekly sessions delivered by their Early Years Music Teacher. Plans are inevitably 'on hold' due to current restrictions across both our settings - and will be reviewed in October. This is potentially a wonderful opportunity for our learners, and I am very much looking forward to developing a partnership with George Watson's.

Staffing news

- **Principal Teacher post** – I am delighted to welcome Justine Fialka onto our Braidburn Team as Principal Teacher. Justine brings a wealth of experience to our team. She will be based within our Secondary department, but will take up a remit in the context of attainment across all stages of our school.
- **Teacher / Therapist Retirement** –Our lovely Norma Borthwick retired from her teaching post at Braidburn on 10 August. Norma has been such a huge part of our team for many years, working in the role of class teacher. Norma has supported children and young people across both Primary and Secondary departments over the years, and we will miss her; but she has indicated she is keen to support Braidburn as a supply teacher, if required; and we look forward to taking her up on this offer! Julie Gray retired from her post as Speech and Language Therapist in July after many years working at Braidburn. Julie has supported so many of us and made such a difference for so many children and young people across the school. I am delighted that Julie has joined our 'Friends of Braidburn' team – and her support for our school will continue in this context.

We wish Norma and Julie all the very best for a happy retirement and do, of course, look forward to welcoming them back into school as soon as we can to ensure we can give them a proper 'Braidburn Farewell'.
- **Primary Department staffing** – Natalie Herbert has taken up the post of Class Teacher in our Primary department on a temporary basis. Natalie knows our primary department well; and I am delighted she has agreed to stay on our team as we move into the new school session.
- **Secondary Department staffing** – We are delighted to welcome Caroline Gillies on to our Secondary team as teacher in Spey Class. Caroline has joined us as a permanent member of staff.

Aileen Mullen, our wonderful Art Teacher, has taken the decision to reduce her hours at Braidburn this session. Aileen will be in school 4 days per week from 1 September.
- **Support Staffing** – We are currently recruiting for 1 x 28.5 hour PSA post, along with 1 x 16 hour PSA post. Job adverts for these roles are currently live on MyjobScotland. We are also looking to recruit a member of staff with skills in using British Sign Language (BSL). This member of staff will join our support team in the context of a specific remit supporting children and young people with BSL.

Friends of Braidburn (FOBS) update

- **Resources to support our return to school** – Our wonderful 'Friends of Braidburn' committee have agreed funding for the purchase of a range of resources to support our return to school. Funding has been agreed for resources to support learning across the school, both outdoors and indoors.
- **Funding for 'wheeled' equipment** – A recent donation, ringfenced for 'wheeled equipment', has been used to purchase a range of resources (including scooters,

prams and 'cars') for playground use. Purchase of these resources was co-ordinated by a group of school staff, in discussion with our wider team.

- **Funding for PE Speaker** – Our PE team were delighted to receive funding for a speaker to support PE sessions. They have chosen a portable, waterproof speaker which can be used both indoors and outdoors; and I know our children will have lots of fun during PE sessions enhanced with music!
- **Smartboards** – FOBS have agreed funding for two Smartboards. These will be installed in our Gym hall and Sensory Circuits Room.
- **Thanks, and appreciation** - Our school team are so grateful for all the support we receive from FOBS. The committee are so wonderfully supportive, proactive and collaborative; and the funding they bring makes such a difference for our children and young people. We appreciate members of FOBS taking time, outwith planned meetings, to review funding requests. We look forward to working with the FOBS team again this year, with a view to taking on bigger projects.
- **Next FOBS meeting** – 2 November 2020 (via Microsoft Teams)

Notable Dates

Monday 21 September	Autumn Holiday
Friday 16 October	Mid – Term break
Monday 26 October	In Service Day (Staff only)
Tuesday 27 October	Learners return to school

Parent Questions

Plans for outdoor education? Contingency planning in unsuitable weather? Individual risk assessments as this is not suitable for all kids.

In line with guidance for the first phase of our return to school, learning is taking place outside, where possible. To ensure we are minimising contacts for our learners, a rota for access to our outdoor areas has been established – and learners are accessing outdoor spaces only in their identified 'bubbles'. Whilst we are encouraging use of outdoor areas – and whilst some children enjoy time outside in a range of weather conditions - there is absolutely no requirement for individuals / classes to access these areas during every identified 'slot'; and indoor classroom areas remain available for use at all times. Our overarching plan for increased access to outdoor areas must be underpinned by an individualised approach, and measures are in place for individual learners, where concerns around outdoor access have been raised. A plan for teaching, learning and assessment outdoors will be outlined in our Phase 2 Renewal Plan, and our lovely 'Friends of Braidburn' committee have recently agreed funding for a range of resources to support learning outdoors. These resources have been ordered and we are very grateful, as always, for their support.

Is there temperature control in classrooms when windows open? Again, individual risk assessments needed.

In line with guidance, we are promoting additional ventilation across our school, by keeping windows open where possible. It is important that we do this in the context of ensuring the comfort of learners and staff – and our teams make dynamic risk assessments throughout each day in terms of ensuring a balance between additional ventilation and warmth. Local Authority guidance to open windows where possible will be reviewed as we enter the winter months.

Bubble timetables, what do they look like?

All children and young people are currently following a timetable for their own class group. Class groups within identified 'Bubbles' are currently using shared outdoor spaces together in the context of a rota for access to outdoor areas.

Impact on subjects kids can access? Art? music? HE? Life skills? Will the teacher move or be carried out by classroom teams?

It is essential, in line with current guidance, that we minimise transitions around our school. We are also required, in the context of Risk Assessment, to reduce contacts to minimise risk of infection. Our Specialist Teachers have joined individual 'Bubble' teams and are each supporting across identified bubbles. Delivery of learning is currently taking place in the context of a Base Class model, with all curricular areas planned and delivered by the class teacher along with one identified Specialist teacher.

Health partners? How will this work? Will there be individual plans for children in place?

Partnership working is a strength at Braidburn. Our NHS colleagues provide considerable additionality and specialism for children and young people receiving their support; and our Allied Health Professionals continue to provide support for our children and young people at Braidburn. This is in the context of our school Renewal Plan, and also within the context of measures identified in NHS Risk Assessment. NHS staff currently attend classrooms only when their attendance is considered to be essential; and all NHS staff are required to wear PPE during all contact with learners. Our class teams are liaising closely with our NHS partners who are providing support and advice remotely for staff, where required. I am engaging in a monthly meeting with our Allied Health Professionals, including our school paediatrician.

Can photos of staff and children in Bubbles be made available to allow children to be able to talk/sign/use PECS to tell you about their day?

Our 'Bubbles' are currently sharing outside spaces but are not mixing outwith these times. Our children are currently getting to know a number of new peers and adults within their new class groups, and we do hope the photos of class learners and staff are a useful resource as part of supporting our learners in getting to know everyone working around them. We do not plan to extend the sharing of class photos to 'bubbles' at this time; but this is something that can be considered in the future if our 'bubbles' model develops in the context of joint learning.

Can a mobile phone number be made available to all parents for an "on call" contact for when school has finished for the day but any emergency issues can be brought such as - medications left in school over the weekend, issue with what's come home/not etc.?

We do not have an 'on call' mobile contact number available outwith school hours. We do, of course, always aim to ensure all required resources are sent home in bags at the end of each day, and there are rarely issues around this. We will, however, tighten up our procedures to minimise the risk of leaving important items in school. I do, very often, pick up and respond to emails outwith working hours, including at weekends - but cannot always guarantee an immediate response.

What clothes/equipment is required for each child and what to do if the family cannot afford to purchase such additional outdoor clothing - a contact for such an eventuality?

As part of promoting our positive school ethos, we encourage wearing of school uniform, where possible. Our uniform comprises a red 'Braidburn' sweatshirt / polo shirt with comfortable trousers, joggers or skirt. Whilst we do encourage wearing of uniform, the comfort of our learners is a priority, and there is no expectation that all learners must wear school uniform. We do suggest an outdoor jacket for wearing outside, and ask that parents provide this, where possible. We will always support, where this is not – and ordered a range of waterproof trousers and jackets (aged 3 – 16) last session as an additional support for children to access outdoor areas in wet weather. These resources were purchased using our Pupil Equity Funding and can be accessed by learners across our school. Some families may also be entitled to a school clothing grant which can help towards buying school clothes. Our office can share details re applications for school clothing grants. Please do contact our school office or your child's class teacher if you are concerned about purchasing any items of school uniform or outdoor clothing.

Are we able to offer outgrown outdoor clothing items to other learners? Can they be sent into school to be handed over to the other learner?

We are delighted to accept used clothing items that children have outgrown – both outdoor clothing and school uniform. Used items of clothing can be kept in school as 'spares' or can be handed to families who we know would appreciate this. When clothing is handed in we would ask that you let us know if you have a preference as to how it is to be used / shared.

When will the details of the Family Support Worker be made available to all parents - to introduce the person, their contact details, their photo (to put a face to a name) and what their remit is?

We have engaged the services of Celia Koukou and Gabrielle Podvoiskis who will be making contact via email / letter with all our families in the next few days. Celia and Gabrielle will aim to create a 'Braidburn Family Network' and will offer a range of supports to our Braidburn families.

When are we to send in the "art work" or photos of what was suggested during lockdown? Could there be a gallery on the school Facebook Page? You could ask parents to post?



Please send pebbles, collages and bunting in to school now! We have already received some beautiful pieces of artwork made during the school closure, and our class teachers are working with children to produce additional items.

At respite the children's temperature is taken before they enter the building. Is this something school could do? It's done with a non-contact infra-red thermometer.

Our protocols to minimise risk of infection in school have been developed in line with Scottish Government Advice - and all that we do is guided by the most current Health Protection information. We do have strict protocols in place to minimise risk of infection, but routine checking of temperatures as learners enter our setting is not currently indicated as part of this. We will, of course, continue to review the most up to date guidance and adjust our protocols, as necessary. We have access to a non-contact infra-red thermometer in school; and this is used to check body temperature on an individualised basis, where required.

What is allowed to be taken into school? I assume no restrictions as none have been highlighted.

There are no current restrictions, although resources that are brought into school cannot be shared with other learners at any time. We will, of course, continue to review our protocols in the context of current advice; and will advise if there is any change to this.

Will there be use of teams/digital learning, helps as contingency should we have to be at home for any period of time.

The use of digital technologies will support the delivery of learning and teaching in the context of any future periods of home learning. Phase 2 of our Renewal Planning will have a focus on Learning and Teaching; and this will include Digital and Outdoor learning.

Can learning journals be used rather than diaries? Nice to have photos of what the kids have been learning. (This may be done in a different way at Braidburn so forgive the newbie!)

We will be refreshing our Curriculum Rationale over the coming weeks, to ensure that themes, explicit to our own school's unique context, prepare our Braidburn community in what is an evolving landscape. Home / School communication will be considered as part of this, and we will take a strategic approach, in consultation with staff and parents, to any changes that are made within this context.

If, for any reason the transport is deemed unsafe by school staff will they refuse to let that child travel and contact parents or wait for Transport to provide safe Transport.

Do the SMT assist with individual Risk Assessments for those children who require a Risk Assessment - is there collaboration to ensure children's safety.

Home / School transport is the responsibility of the Transport Hub and school staff are not involved in the delivery of this service. The health and safety of our children and young people is paramount, however, and we have a responsibility to respond to any concerns

that we have around the safety of our learners whilst they are in our care. This includes 'handing' learners over into the care of transport staff. School staff often share information (with parental permission) that can support with transport Risk Assessments, as required; and advice is sought from relevant professionals where necessary – eg in the identification of appropriate equipment to support the delivery of transport.

Are toilet breaks being restricted because outdoor learning is taking place? Or are children being taken to the toilet before they go out, to minimise any wet accidents.

Access to our toilet facilities is unaffected by increased use of our outdoor spaces.

When will the laundry be open again for children whose clothes have gotten wet.

In line with our Renewal Plan guidance, the laundry room is currently out of use for washing of wet or soiled clothes. Our plans are reviewed on a regular basis and we will inform staff and parents when we are in a position to reintroduce use of the laundry facilities.

Will school still hold a stock of used clothes for pupils in event that they wet their clothes and have a fresh supply. Would you like parents to send in old and clean school uniform for such incidents.

We do ask that parents send in spare clothes for learners to change into if required. This request is not specific to the context of our return post school closure – and spare clothing is also very useful during times that we have access to laundry facilities. Class teachers liaise with individual parents where it is considered helpful to have more than one set of spare clothes. We do also have a very limited range of spare clothes in school which are used, if required. Please do contact your child or young person's class teacher if you have any concerns around provision of spare clothing.

What is the protocol for children who refuse to get on board transport at the end of the day? I.e. who to collect, how they can access the school car park, who will wait with the child etc.

Protocols for children who do not get on board transport at the end of the day remain unchanged. Transport staff are required to wait in the car park for 10 minutes after the school bell, but in line with guidance from the Transport Hub, leave our premises after this time. Learners are then supervised by school staff – most usually our Senior Leadership Team - as the majority of our staff are not contractually obliged to remain in the building, after the school day has ended. Nursery Nurses are often available until 4.30pm (Mon – Thurs) and can be available to support. If children do not get on board school transport, collection from school becomes a parental responsibility. An individualised, collegiate approach is taken to identifying support strategies in the unusual event of any learner regularly experiencing difficulties in the context of accessing afternoon transport.

Face masks are made mandatory for high school between classes would this include Braidburn high school kids?

Children in secondary schools, including special schools, will be required to wear face coverings in all areas of the building where physical distancing is particularly hard to maintain. This includes, but is not limited to, corridors. The impact of wearing face coverings for learners with additional support needs, however, must be carefully considered; and we understand that many of our learners will not wear such coverings.

Where learners are able, and comfortable, to wear face coverings, we would encourage this – but we do fully understand that this may not be possible or appropriate for the majority of learners in our secondary department.

When will the Play Therapist be allowed back into the school to resume their sessions?

We are mindful that having more adults in schools than is necessary at any one time creates an increased health and safety risk. We are following the most up to date guidance as regards to non-core staff accessing our building at this time; and I believe this will be reviewed in October.

Are the learners being sent out in the rain?

We are making use of outdoor space, where we can; and as is always the case, some individual learners will access our playgrounds in a range of weather conditions. Although a rota is in place to ensure increased availability of outdoor spaces to our learners, indoor spaces (classrooms) are available at all times - and the number of children spending time outdoors when it is raining is reduced in comparison to the numbers outside in drier conditions. The Scottish summer can be quite unpredictable – and we do ask that children bring an outdoor coat to school. We have also invested in a range of waterproof trousers / jackets– purchased last session using Pupil Equity Funding. Please do keep in touch with your child’s class teacher with any concerns around access to the playground areas.

Cat Weir (31 August 2020)