



Information for parents - August 2020

Dear Parents,

It has been lovely to welcome our pupils back in to school and to get to know our new first years. There have been lots of changes for returning pupils to get used to, and new S1s have had even more to learn than in a usual transition, but I am proud to say that Stromness Academy pupils have taken this in their stride. All of us, pupils and staff, occasionally forget one of the new rules, but we are working on being kind and responsible in reminding one another. It would be particularly helpful if parents could support us by ensuring pupils have a face covering with them each day and wear it as they get onto school transport in the mornings.

This newsletter is necessarily much longer than normal as there is extra information to pass on related to the Covid19 situation. We start with a communication from OIC for all parents which aims to clarify what you should do if your child is sick. After that, we have labelled each section with the year groups to which it is relevant, to help you pinpoint what you need to read; I hope that helps.

The national situation changes constantly, and anything I write to you can become out of date very quickly. Day-to-day changes are relayed to pupils via the school's Daily Bulletin, and I would encourage parents to make a habit of looking at this on the [school website](#). Also on the website are copies of all letters we send to parents. These go out via email, with a text to alert you, so if there is any change to your contact details, please keep us updated so that you don't miss out on important information.

If you have any questions regarding information in this newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact the school office on 850660 or admin.sa@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk and they will direct you to someone who can help.

Kind regards

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 <https://www.facebook.com/stromnessacademy/> website: www.stromnessacademy.org.uk

Guidance for parents: My child is unwell, should I send her/him to school or nursery?



We recognise that it can be difficult deciding when to keep your child off school, nursery or playgroup when they're unwell.

Generally, you will instinctively know whether they are well enough to get the most out of the day, or if they are just too poorly to benefit and need to be at home.

If they are being sick or are in pain, you will probably want to seek advice from your GP. If you do decide to keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school or nursery on the first day. Let them know of the absence and give them the reason.

Once main symptoms pass, children generally recover quickly, and you may want to return them to school or nursery.

There are guidelines that say when children **should** be kept off, for example if you child has symptoms that include vomiting or diarrhoea, then you **must** wait for 2 days (48 hours) after the symptoms have gone before thinking about sending them back.

As we approach winter, we want our school communities to be healthy communities. Consequently, while no child will be excluded for having a runny or blocked nose or a sore throat, we are asking everyone to take extra care. If your child isn't well enough to get the most out of the day, please keep them at home.

Please remember your child will be sent home immediately if they are showing symptoms of coronavirus.

Coronavirus/COVID-19

If your child is displaying any of the following symptoms, they **must not** attend school or nursery:

- a high temperature or fever
- a new **continuous** cough
- a loss of, or change in sense of smell or taste

A new, continuous cough means coughing for longer than an hour, or three or more coughing episodes in 24 hours. If your child usually has a cough, it may be worse than usual.

If your child has any of these symptoms (however mild), they will need to stay at home for 10 days. Everyone else in the household will need to stay at home for 14 days from the start of the symptoms even if they don't have symptoms themselves. You can follow the NHS guidelines and arrange for them to be tested:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19> .

If you seek a test, your child should remain at home until they get the result of the test, and then follow the advice given based on the result. The household can end the period of self-isolation early if your child receives a negative test result.

S1-6: Face coverings FAQ

A reminder that all pupils should wear face coverings at school, as follows:

- Face coverings should be worn in all communal areas of the school, and on school transport.
- Communal areas means everywhere inside the building, except for a classroom. Pupils are welcome to wear a face covering in classrooms too if they wish.
- Pupils can take off the face covering to eat or drink, but should put it back on when they have finished.
- Pupils don't have to wear a face covering outside.
- If a pupil forgets their face covering, they should ask at the Front Office for a disposable one.



S1-6: Staff Absence

We have several teachers absent at present (thankfully none with COVID-19), and so pupils may find their lesson is being covered by another teacher. We will try to provide work for the relevant subject wherever possible, but where this is not possible we will use this time for extra work on the key skills of literacy and numeracy.

Mrs Lennon, Guidance Teacher for Magnus House will not be in school this term. Mrs Nixon, Support for Learning Teacher, has stepped in as Registration Teacher for 1M, supporting this class each morning. For other Guidance matters, parents and pupils should contact Miss Murray if the pupil is in 1M, 2M or 3M, and Mrs Johansen if in 4M, 5M or 6M.



S1-6: Visiting Staff

We are pleased to say that it has now been made possible for some visiting staff to be at the school and keep within the covid-safe guidelines. Staff who will now be supporting our pupils in person include: School Counsellor, ASD Pupil Support, Careers Advisor, Instrumental Instructors. We are very grateful to these staff and their colleagues for their efforts to make this possible.

S1-6: Covid Quarantine after travelling



We have been asked by Scotland's Chief Medical Officer to remind parents that all those returning to Scotland from non-exempt countries must self-isolate at home or another appropriate location for 14 days. Those self-isolating should not go out to work or school or visit public areas. Please bear this in mind if you are considering travelling during the October break. The list of exempt countries changes – please consult it online [here](#).

S1-6: PE Changing

Government guidance for the teaching of PE issued at the start of term stated that all PE must be outdoors, and recommended that changing rooms are not used, hence our request to parents that pupils come to school already dressed for their PE class. We are aware that this is not ideal, and that in particular pupils would prefer to be able to change their clothes after a PE lesson. After discussion with Orkney Education, it has been agreed that we will begin working on procedures for using changing rooms in a covid-safe manner. This will involve finding ways to ensure benches/hooks etc are cleaned between uses and groups of pupils do not mix. We will begin with a trial phase of Senior Phase pupils being able to use the changing room; if this is successful we will then look to extend it to other year groups. S1-3 pupils should continue to arrive at school in their PE kit and will not change out of it unless they get wet or muddy. If this happens we will arrange for them to be able to change, so they should bring spare clothing in case it is needed.



PE lessons will continue to be outside unless government guidance changes, so please ensure your child wears warm PE kit. In poor weather, theoretical lessons will be held in classrooms.

S4-6: Study Support



E-Sgoil (Gaelic for e-school) is a national programme funded by the Scottish Government. They are offering online study support lessons after school to help pupils make up for lost learning time. Courses start next week and are free. Subjects available:

N5: Maths, Physics, English

Higher: Business, Physics, Computing, Music, French, Maths, English, History, Chemistry

Find out more and sign up at e-sgoil.com

If your child would like to take part but lack of a computer or internet connection is stopping them, please speak to their Guidance Teacher

S5-6: 2020 SQA Results – updated certificates

I am sure you will be aware that the Scottish Government made the decision to change how grades are awarded to pupils whose exams were cancelled this year. The certificates which were sent to pupils on 4th August are based on the SQA moderation, with many results downgraded from teacher estimates. Pupil grades will now be changed as follows:

- Where the SQA moderation lowered the grade from teacher estimate, it will be restored to teacher estimate
- Where the SQA moderation raised the grade from teacher estimate, this grade will remain.

New certificates will be issued by SQA on 8th September; in the interim, we have provided pupils with a school printout of their new grades.



S5-6: 2020 SQA Results - appeals



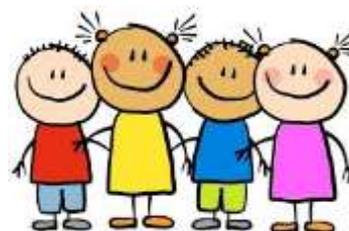
You may have heard that when this year's SQA results were changed to teacher estimates, John Swinney mentioned there would still be some limited appeals. Information on this has now been published. Grounds for appeal are very limited and unlikely to apply to many pupils:

Ground for appeal	Will this apply to our pupils?
The Head of Centre believes there has been an error within SQA's internal processes for reinstating the original centre estimate.	Stromness Academy has checked that SQA's new grades match our estimates. We do not believe anyone should be needing an appeal on this ground.
The Head of Centre believes that there has been an administrative error within the centre leading to provision of estimate information to SQA.	Stromness Academy carried out quality assurance on the estimates we submitted and teachers have checked that the submitted grades are what they intended. We do not believe anyone should be needing an appeal on this ground.
The Head of Centre believes that there has been discrimination or other conduct contrary to the Equality Act 2010	The protected characteristics are listed at https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights If you feel your child has been discriminated against in the awarding of estimated grades on one of these grounds, please contact the school.

Appeals must be submitted to SQA by Monday 7th September, but investigating and processing an appeal takes time. If you believe your child has grounds for an appeal, please contact the school by **Wednesday 3rd September**.

All parents: Do you need childcare for children aged 0-3?

OIC is looking to provide more childcare for this age group and wants to find out how much demand there is. If you would be interested in making use of this service from January, please see [here](#) for more info or contact elc@orkney.gov.uk



S1: Settling In evening

Normally at this time of year we would be looking forward to meeting parents of the new S1 for a settling in evening. This gives parents a chance to meet key people, such as their child's Guidance Teacher, Head of Year and Support for Learning staff, and get to know the school and S1 routines a little better. Things will clearly be different this year and we won't be able to meet you in person, but S1 parents should look out for a letter from Ms Morrison in the next few days explaining how we aim to achieve this in a covid-safe way.

S1: MidYIS Assessment

MidYIS

The MidYIS (Middle Years Information System) assessment is used in schools to give us information about pupils' general academic ability, which helps us to track their progress and support them if they are not achieving the levels we would expect. S1 will be doing this assessment next week. It is not something pupils need to revise for or should be concerned about in any way. The assessment is done online, and adapts to pupils' answers so that they are presented with questions at the right ability level for them. For more information, please see www.cem.org



All parents: Stromness Academy Parent Council

Stromness Academy Parent Council work together with school staff to the benefit of all pupils. They act as a sounding board for school policies and developments, influencing change by putting in the parent perspective. They also have a sub-committee who fund-raise for the school and have been proud to be able to respond to staff requests for equipment to enrich learning.

It would be good to have some new members; if you are interested in getting involved, please contact the Parent Council via the school on admin.sa@glow.orkneyschools.org.uk or their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/StromnessAcademyParents>

All parents: Dropping off pupils by car

A reminder that if you are dropping off pupils at school by car, please use the “top lane” in the car park – the one closest to the road. This leaves the lane closest to the buildings free for school buses. Thanks.



S3: Scottish National Standardised Assessments

Scottish National Standardised Assessments (SNSA) will be carried out for our S3 pupils during September. Your child may remember doing this in P7; they are online assessments in reading, writing and numeracy. These assessments are done by every child across Scotland and are used by teachers to identify areas of literacy and numeracy with which pupils need support, and to measure progress over time. Your child should not be worried about these assessments; it is not a “test” they can revise for and no results are given to anyone other than their teachers, who will use them to target lessons at areas where pupils need help. At Stromness Academy we would normally do these assessments in November; we are doing them earlier this year to establish where our pupils are at after lockdown, so that we can maximise the time we have to help them get back on track.

If you would like to find out more about SNSA, there is information for parents on the [SNSA website](#).