

5th March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers



Building our Dysart Community back up together

The coronavirus outbreak created unprecedented events in living memory and the challenges of lockdown have affected us all, creating increased levels of anxiety and stress. As we open our doors to all our pupils' fulltime after two months of lockdown and part time attendance, many of our parents, pupils and staff will be feeling worried and anxious.

Life will not immediately return to normal, rather there will be a long period of adjustment where our lives gradually move towards something that looks like 'normal'. Many of us have lost our routine during lockdown which will have impacted areas such as sleep and bedtime and so re-establishing a routine will be a something we need to prioritise for our pupils. This will help our pupils to know what to expect, giving them the consistency and tools to manage their emotions. The new routine can be supported by the use of visual timetables, extra time and space for transitions, movement breaks and plenty of joint thinking of strategies to provide support.

We don't yet know the full impact that the past few months and indeed the past year has had on our pupil's mental health and emotional wellbeing. One thing we do know is that change, anxiety and trauma presents itself in many different ways. Some of our pupils may demonstrate obvious signs of anxiety and others may be more complex in their presentation. Some of our pupil's may find it challenging to re-engage with their learning as soon as they return, others may be delayed in showing this. Whichever way our pupils choose to show us, we know they will **all** require even more patience, time and space to rebuild trust and relationships and ensure they are emotionally settled and re- engaged to learn.

We know that it would be naive of us to think that our pupils will simply pick up their learning at exactly the same point at which they left it prior to the pandemic, so much has happened in this time. And so, our pupils require all of us to manage our expectations on where they are in terms of their functional, communication and cognitive skills. Teachers will be focusing on re-igniting their pupils' engagement and love of learning, ensuring that the foundations for their learning (engagement, emotional regulation and communication) through our new SCERTS curriculum area are in place as a priority prior to embarking on their curriculum outcomes. More details regarding SCERTS will follow next week.

Families may be struggling with the idea of their child returning to school, especially with the threat of another outbreak. We understand our families fears and we hope we have reassured you through our recent letter detailing how we are continuing to keep our community safe during the pandemic. If you have any further concerns or questions, please do not hesitate to contact your child's class teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership team.

Yours sincerely



Leigh Edser
Principal

