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Dear Balmedie Families,

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we have taken much needed time to develop our return to school/school recovery plans for August.

We would like to apologise for the delay as we appreciate this situation continues to be a stressful and anxious time for everyone concerned. We hope this information will provide all families with the information needed to support your own personal plans for returning to school, returning to work and to support with organising any advanced additional childcare needs as we enter the summer break period.

We are pleased to confirm that we have reached a moment of national and local stability where we are finally able to share the details of our return to school plans and also share our contingency school recovery plans (both on a 33% return model and a 50% return model).

For the moment, we have been guided to plan for a 100% return and we will continue to follow advice on which plan will be required to deliver as per guidance provided by the Scottish Government and Aberdeenshire Council.

A range of increased hygiene and infection control measures have been set up across the school and this will remain in place for some time to come, regardless of which school recovery plan will be in place. These include increased handwashing areas and hand sanitising points at every school entrance and exit – all children will be supported and encouraged to follow this new routine as much as possible.

We have listed a summary of all three possible school recovery plans to make the information more accessible and it also would help to illustrate to you all how these plans would work alongside the necessary social distancing rules.

We have also created an information booklet that illustrates the number of changes and developments that the school and staff have taken forward - including our school recovery plans in more detail to support children, families and staff.

Our school handbook will also be posted/resent to new parents to ensure as much information is available to parents at this time.

Please access our following blog link below to access a variety of support information which will be added today and tomorrow. We hope that you may find this resource space helpful to assist in any advanced preparation and may allow some opportunity to become more at ease and to prepare your child for any further changes (if you feel that this would help them too).

This week's episode of Happy Head, Happy Heart podcast (also featuring today on the blog page) involves a Q&A based upon questions which the children have sent in, many of which

relate to the re-opening of school (in between other more random but fun questions!). We hope this podcast may also act as a support to easily engage in discussion and questions around returning to school.

School staff have also been preparing prepared 'welcome back' message videos so that all children have an opportunity to meet their teacher who will share a little bit of information and advice about returning to school. These will also be posted tomorrow along with a few other end of term/end of year messages from the staff!

<https://balmediehomelearning.edublogs.org/>

If there are any unexpected circumstances than would mean our 100% return plan needs to be adjusted prior our school starting week in August, the school (or Aberdeenshire Council) will notify all families as soon as practically possible.

Further information from Balmedie School would be also provided in relation to how children would be grouped and what changes would be made to child groupings. school attendance dates and attendance times etc.

We all must continue to bear in mind that COVID-19 is a constantly changing situation and it remains necessary that the entire school community must be prepared to respond appropriately to increase or decrease social distancing measures, should the need arise.

We understand that parents may still have many questions and anxieties regarding returning their child(ren) school but at this stage we can only share our expectations and the range of possibilities that still may occur.

In the event of any significant changes when we return to school after the summer break then I would be happy to provide a further online forum for parents i.e. through Skype or Google Meet (now that we finally have the permissions/set up for this service).

I believe that this would be a necessary and useful future communication tool along with our blog site and Groupcall Xpressions service, to successfully review and share updates as things progress.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all school staff for their marvellous efforts and contribution – especially to the administration and staff over the last few weeks, who have simply accomplished 'mission impossible' given the enormous amount of information to be organised, processed and circulated of late.

Wish you all a safe, relaxing and happy holiday – very best wishes to our P7 Leavers, we will miss you! We very much look forward to seeing you all back at Balmedie very soon.

Kind Regards



Dougie Ford
Head Teacher