



# Knox Academy

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Dear Parents/Carers

## Phased return of S1-S6 pupils at Knox Academy – 15 March – 1 April 2021

I hope this letter finds you safe and well. After two and a half months off it feels very positive to be writing to you to give you detailed information about welcoming all of our young people back to Knox Academy for a phased return from 15 March. We have been asked, by the Scottish Government, to prioritise face to face teaching for S4-S6 pupils and to ensure that all pupils experience some in school learning during these three weeks too. During the phased return we would ask, that as best as possible, pupils wear [school uniform](#) and bring a cosy jacket/fleece to wear over this to keep them warm, if required.

### Is the school safe for my young person to attend?

With this return, and to ensure the safety of both our young people and staff, a number of safety measures have been put in place to keep everyone safe and we all need to play our part in following these to stay safe and well and keep our community safe.

Rigorous risk assessments have been carried out as we have had our in-school provision (critical childcare) and some of our senior phase practical subjects up and running already this term. Thorough **cleaning** takes place at the start and end of each day, and communal areas, such as toilets and dining facilities, will be cleaned during the day. At the end of each morning and afternoon session work areas will be wiped clean by staff and pupils prior to the arrival of a new class, who will also clean their area on arrival.



All pupils will sanitise their hands on arrival at school, and on departing. Hand sanitiser units are located at all entry and exits points and in the dining area. Hands will also be sanitised when moving between classes. Soap dispensers in toilets will be checked regularly and warm water will always be available. Individual pupil toilets are available on each level of the school, with hand washing facilities which will be available to all pupils. Hand sanitiser will be available in each classroom for use on arrival and departure. It would also be ideal if pupils could also bring their own to school.

All communal toilets will be shut during the phased return. Pupils will be able to access the many individual toilets around the school building, on all levels, which will ensure that 2M physical distancing can be maintained. Our pupils will be asked to request toilet access as and when required.

The wearing of a **face covering** is expected by **all** pupils (**S1-S6**) and staff, at **all** times, unless they are exempt (including in classrooms, communal areas and when moving around the school) as per [Scottish Government Guidelines](#). We will also adhere to the Scottish Government's advice of Test and Protect (Test, Trace, Isolate and Support). We have a self-isolation room in the school for pupils or staff who show symptoms of Covid-19 and we will arrange for them to be picked up as soon as possible.

### **Lateral Flow Testing Kits (all pupils now from S1-S6)**

All **S4-S6** pupils and their parents have previously been made aware of the **Lateral Flow Device** (LFD) Tests available to all pupils who wish to participate in this programme – and many S4-S6 pupils who have already attended school for practical subjects over the past few weeks have taken this up and we hope when the rest of our seniors arrive next week they will also enrol on the programme (voluntary but recommended). To make the process easier for consenting, we have moved to an e-consent form and this can be completed [here](#). If your young person is about to run out of a test kit (and when they are down to one test left), they should pick up another one at the school office on arrival or departure from school, maintaining 2M physical distancing when doing so. Tests must be done off school premises and logged as per user guidelines. There is no need to complete another consent form when collecting subsequent kits. All the information on LFD tests, including a privacy notice, is available [here](#).

Testing will now be rolled out all pupils from **S1-S3** and we aim to supply all pupils, who wish to participate in the programme, and whose parents have complete a consent form, with one test kit prior to Easter (official roll out for S1-S3 is after Easter), so they can start testing themselves before they return to school after the Easter holiday. More information will follow about this over the next week and we will explain the process to all S1, S2 and S3 pupils when they return to school next week.

### **Covid-19 Symptoms**

If your young person is attending school (or the in-school provision – critical childcare), please **do not** send them if they, or anyone in your household has tested positive or has Covid-19 symptoms. Please self-isolate and book a test. If they are in S4-S6 and attending school for a practical subject(s) and they test positive using the lateral flow device testing kit, they should also self-isolate and book a PCR test. Please continue to report any cases to the school by phoning: 01620 823387 and also to [covidinschools@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:covidinschools@eastlothian.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01875 613921.

### **Resources**

The sharing of resources such as pens/pencils/rulers/calculators will be discouraged. As far as possible pupils should bring their own 'stationery kit' to school, but we will have equipment for those who need to borrow it. Wipes will be issued to pupils to clean desks, chairs and computer keyboards before use/on arrival to class as this will reassure them that their area is clean and safe for their use. If your young person has their own Chromebook/laptop it would be great if they can bring this with them for learning.

**Movement** throughout the school will be limited for pupils in S1, S2 and S3, teachers will go to their classroom to teach them so they remain in the same 'bubble' for the time they are in. As pupils in S4 - S6 are following subject choices there will be more movement around the school for these year groups. We will operate a one way-system throughout the school building, which will be clearly signed, and pupils will be asked to follow this at all times and to ensure 2M physical distancing takes place in corridors, as well as in classrooms.

**Class sizes** - Classes will generally accommodate no more than 10 pupils and all rooms have been audited to ensure appropriate spacing of desks, following the current 2M guideline. In a small number of occasions, larger groups of up to about 30 pupils may be taught together in the assembly hall or games hall. These are large areas and allow for 2M physical distancing between desks and have good ventilation. All classrooms will be set up with 2M physical distancing measures for everyone's safety and we ask that this measure, put in place by the Scottish Government to control the spread of Covid-19, is adhered to all times when pupils and staff are on school premises. There may be a few circumstances this may not be possible due to supporting ASN pupils or in a medical emergency and staff will be asked to wear PPE at these times. Staff will be asked to keep classrooms and areas well ventilated and to open windows where possible and to leave room doors open to support the

circulation of air. We will also be aiming to make use of outdoor learning, where possible, so pupils should bring an outdoor jacket with them to school and this can also be worn when they find it cool in rooms.

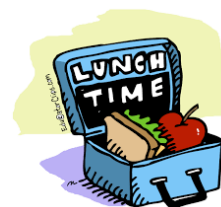
### **Arrival and Departure Times**

Pupils will have a fifteen minutes flexible arrival and departure time to ensure staggered entry and exit to the school building. Pupils should arrive from 8.15 onwards (morning session) and 12.15pm onwards (afternoon sessions) and should enter the school by the main entrance to ensure staff can monitor 2M distancing, face coverings and hand sanitising and support any pupil who is unsure where to go. On arrival pupils must proceed straight to their classroom as detailed in the timetable they have been sent. If a pupil arrives late they should proceed to the main entrance and sign in at the office.

At the end of the morning or afternoon session, teachers will accompany their classes to the nearest exit to the classroom to avoid crowding in corridors. Pupils will sanitise their hands on exit from the school. As groups will be spread across the school this should mean that 2M physical distancing can take place. Pupils will be asked to go straight home or to the buses/taxis if they have home/school transport. Pupils may now walk home with up to three other pupils, from different households, maintaining 2M social distancing.

### **Breaks and lunches**

As attendance at the school during the phased return is, for most pupils, a morning or afternoon block of time, pupils will be given a small break mid-morning or mid-afternoon. This break will be in class and supervised by the teacher. If pupils wish to eat a small, light snack at this time they should bring this with them. Water bottles should also be brought with them so they can access a drink throughout the morning or afternoon sessions.



**Lunches** - For the senior phase pupils attending on a Thursday for the morning and afternoon sessions, we would ask that they leave the building during lunch time (go home ideally for lunch, if they can). If they are unable to do this we will be able to accommodate a small number of pupils in the dining hall and assembly hall (all desks 2M apart) and they may eat their lunch there. The aim here is to minimise the spread of Covid-19 by having as few pupils in the building over lunch time to prevent any pupils gathering together.

Free School Meals – Parents/carers of those young people who receive free school meals will continue to receive a BACS payment to you directly to purchase lunches for your young person. The school will not be providing lunches for pupils during the 3 weeks phased return. The Food Court will only provide lunches for those in the in-school provision, as has been the case throughout their attendance at this.

### **Expectations of conduct**

The Scottish Government has specified that in order for schools to re-open safely we all must adhere to 2 metres physical distancing and all pupils and staff will be expected to fully cooperate with this to ensure we are all safe at Knox Academy. Responsible behaviour will be expected at all times. As a staff team we will do our best to support and advise our pupils how to get this right in classes, corridors, and lunch time (for the small number who may need to stay in school at this time) and in the entry and exit to the school building. However if any young person wilfully jeopardises or compromises the safety of others we may have to ask that they complete all of their learning remotely until such a time as it is safe for them to return to the school.

### **Fire Evacuation**

In light of all the changes to the school during the Staged Return, our fire evacuation arrangements have been reviewed and the new procedures will be communicated to all staff and pupils during the first few days of their return to school.

### **Transport**

Wherever possible pupils will be encouraged to walk or cycle to school. Spaces on school transport will be more limited with 1M physical distancing (as per Scottish Gvt guidelines) and parents/carers may wish to consider the health and safety of their young person first and foremost before using school transport/public transport and make arrangements to drop off and pick up their young person from school. This may also mean that areas outside school may be busier so planning to leave earlier to make your journey may be advantageous so your young person can walk the last part of the route if you drop them a little further from the school gates. The school has been liaising with transport for those who have arrangements in place to let them know what days and times year groups will be in. The school or transport will be in touch with families directly to let them know arrangements for pick up/drop off.

### **Visiting the school**

Parents/Carers and Visitors will not be allowed into the school during the Covid-19. All communication will be by telephone or email and any meetings will be held virtually. It is vital therefore that we have email addresses for all of our parents/carers, so if these need updated, or you still need to give us one, please telephone the school on 01620 823387 or alternatively, drop us an email at [admin@knox.elcschool.org.uk](mailto:admin@knox.elcschool.org.uk). Thank you.

If you wish to contact your young person during school time you should call the school office as usual. Please avoid phoning your young person's mobile phone as this disrupts learning and teaching for all in the class when we have an effective system in place to get messages to pupils via our school office. Thank you for your support with this procedure.

### **Blended Learning**

As set out by the Scottish Government, and to support schools reconnecting with our learners in a safe and socially distanced way, pupils will be taught using a 'blended learning' approach during 15 March – 1 April. This is quite different from the remote learning approach that took place between January and mid-March in that pupils will have some of their learning face to face with their teachers in school and this will be supplemented with



Google Classrooms when at home. In order to run the in-school timetable one class of 30 pupils now needs to be split in to 3 classes of 10 to adhere to 2M physical distancing and the size of classrooms we have available (with the exception of the odd class that will run as a group of 30 in the assembly or games hall). If we have all of S1 in this means that instead of six classes running, we now need 18. This also means 18 teachers. When we have senior phase pupils all in, we will require about 40 teachers in to support learning and teaching. We are hoping to provide as high quality remote learning as possible but this does present a challenge as teachers now have split responsibilities between face:face learning and teaching in school and balancing this with remote learning. As senior pupils will be receiving three hour face to face learning and teaching for their subjects, they will be issued follow up work by teachers at these sessions and this will allow them to continue their work remotely between sessions. Senior remote learning time will also incorporate meetings for learner conversations (as detailed in the letter sent on Tuesday). Most of our Remote Learning will focus on work for BGE learners over these three weeks as they are only in school for a morning each week.

Given the restrictions of the 2M distancing and that a number of S4-S6 practical sessions have already run over the last three weeks, with work having been completed, the focus over the next three weeks for senior phase will be subjects where face to face/direct learning and teaching is vital to support SQA qualifications. Where this is the case, and pupils do not have a written assessment as part of their qualification, these subjects will continue to be taught remotely. Teachers will email pupils to let them know this and parents/carers can check this with them. We will also put a list of these subjects on our website at the end of the week so everyone is clear about this.

Thank you for your continuing support of this. Our [remote learning](#) document also provides additional opportunities for those young people who wish to supplement what the school provides over the next three weeks. There is also an opportunity for S4-S6 pupils to sign up for [Easter Study session](#) with E-Sgoil. These will support their SQA qualifications and revision for assessments in May.

### **In-school learning**

We have designed our in-school programme enabling our S1, S2 and S3 pupils to focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing (nurture and re-connecting). In S4-S6, pupils will continue to study all their chosen subjects but this will be through longer blocks of time in each subject as we believe that immersion in these subjects will help support learning and retention. The 'in-school' experience will focus on aspects of the curriculum that are best suited to teacher directed learning.

**Remote Learning** will complement the in-school learning. Google Classroom will continue to be the platform used for accessing remote learning for all of our pupils. There will be new learning presented through Google Classrooms, some 'live or virtual lessons' and 'tutorials,' as well as Google Class Meetings and online/offline tasks. Some teachers will also use 'flipped learning,' which is where pupils complete tasks in readiness for the learning of a new topic when they come in to school. Feedback will be given to pupils on their learning both at home and when in school.

The blended learning approach therefore allows for a mixture of direct face to face teaching, online/virtual learning/tutorials and feedback. When pupils adapt to this, it helps them become more independent in their learning and make the most progress.

### **What are our expectations with Blended Learning?**

Our expectation is that pupils engage and commit fully with our blended learning approach over the next three weeks to ensure they make effective progress in their learning. It would be very much appreciated if parents/carers support our high expectations and work with us to support your young person by establishing a focused learning routine for them on the days they are at home. Creating a study space or area at home can really help to support this too. We would ask that they actively participate in all of their Google Classrooms to ensure they keep pace with their class and also to enable them to link their learning between school and home, so the transition from one to the other is seamless and blended. Pupils will also still get support and feedback in their online Google Classrooms, as well as when they are in school, to support their learning. During remote learning days we recommend planning for regular breaks and ensuring that exercise and fresh air are a key component of time at home.

### **Bringing Your Own Device**

Pupils will be encouraged to bring their own device to school when they return. These devices should be fully charged in readiness for learning as we will be unable to provide charging facilities. Ideally these devices should be a Chromebook but laptops are also ideal. The school will only be able to provide a very small number of pupils with Chromebooks for learning as most of these were issued to our young people for the last few months and they will still require them until they return to school full time.



Mobile phones are not best used for learning and teaching and therefore should remain switched off and in bags during lessons and only used before/after school.

### **Reporting, Tracking and Monitoring**

As the parents/carers of Senior Phase young people are already aware ([letter sent on 9 March](#)) the March reporting schedule has been adapted. Given that our senior phase young people have not completed formal assessments (based on SQA guidance) during this period of remote learning, formal reports will no longer be shared in March 2021 for S4-S6 pupils. Instead, S4-S6 young people will all have formal learning conversations with their teachers in each of their certificated subjects to outline their presentation levels, current working grade and provide detailed information about what they have to do to reach their target grade. These conversations will begin on Monday 15 March and will be followed up by an email to the pupil detailing their next steps in learning. Pupils can also share this email with parents/carers.

Following this extended period of remote learning, we feel it would be unfair to share S2 Reports with pupils, parents/carers on Friday 26 March, as planned as all pupils have had different experiences during this time and is not necessarily reflective of their attainment and achievement had they been in school. Given the recent Parent Consultation on Wednesday 3 February, all pupils and parents/carers have had the opportunity to have a formal update on progress.

S1 is due to be reported on in May but we are unsure whether or not this will go ahead given that teachers now have to use all their non-teaching time to mark S4-S6 SQA assessments at this time. We will let S1 parents know whether we will be able to report (or not) after Easter. In terms of general progress during remote learning, parents/carers have been contacted if there are/have been concerns with engagement in remote learning. Once pupils return to school staff will do all we can to support their progress across all subjects.

#### **What will the Blended Learning Timetable look like at Knox Academy?**

Although the six secondary Head Teachers across East Lothian Council have worked to achieve as equitable approach as possible across our schools as we designed our models, we are unable to offer the exact same approaches in all of our schools as our building capacities and staffing are different. What we have done is share our models and supported each other to ensure our individual ones were the best we could devise.

During the next three weeks we will move to a model whereby in-school learning will take place for pupils from Monday – Thursday, with half of S4 in on the two Fridays (19 and 26 March – we will let you know who is in when we give more detail at the end of the week). Some of this time the pupils will be in school, and the rest of the week they will learn remotely, supported by teachers in their Google Classrooms.

#### **When will pupils be in school?**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM 0830 - 1130	S1	S2	S3	S4, S5 and S6	S4 English and Maths
PM 12.30-1520	S4, S5 and S6	S4, S5 and S6	S4, S5 and S6	S4, S5 and S6	

More detail will follow on Friday but we wanted to let you know what days your young people would be expected in school.

S1-S3's time in school will focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. Pupils will receive an email to their EduBuzz accounts letting them know which room they should report to on the morning they are in.

S4, S5 and S6 will follow their SQA subjects. Pupils will receive an email to their EduBuzz accounts with exact details about this (subject, teachers and rooming for each session they are in).

There will be no practical PE over the phased three weeks so there will be no need to bring PE kit to school.

**In-school provision** - Our in-school provision will continue to provide emergency childcare for key workers and vulnerable young people where required and for the times they are not attending classes with the rest of their year group.

### **What should pupils bring to school?**

Pupils should wear their school uniform if possible (a reminder that hooded tops should not be worn and are not part of our school uniform for health and safety reasons - this is even more important at present, as with face coverings, identifying everyone is even more challenging – uniform allows us to know they are part of our school community).



It is more important than ever that pupils have a **school bag**, to bring items in and out of school as **no** lockers will be accessible to ensure pupils do not congregate in this area.

The items that should be in that school bag are:

- Pens/Pencils/ruler/rubber/sharpener
- A calculator
- Whiteboard pen and eraser (provided by the school last term)
- Glue stick and small pair of scissors (rounded edges)
- A couple of full water bottles.
- A packed lunch (for those who are staying between sessions – senior only) and snacks for breaktime (which will take place in class).
- A Chromebook or laptop, **only** if one can be brought in from home
- Hand sanitiser (if possible)
- An outdoor jacket

*To maximise the possibility of safe (and warm!) outdoor learning and for use if they are cool in the classroom.*

I would like to thank you all for reading this letter and appreciate that it is a lot of information to digest at once but it is important that you know exactly what has been done to prepare the school to welcome all our pupils back to Knox Academy from Monday 15 March. Whilst I appreciate that the phased approach is challenging for all, we have done our utmost to prepare a timetable that takes into account the safety of our pupils and staff first and foremost, and the capacity of our building and staffing to both effectively lead learning and teaching both in-school and remotely. We are desperate to see all of our young people back at Knox Academy as soon as is safely possible but in the meantime, I would ask for your support in making our approach to blended learning work. It has been a highly complex task to work within all the parameters we have been set to achieve this in such a short timescale. We hope on Tuesday 20 April, after the Easter holidays, we will all be back at school, full time.

Stay safe and well and we are so looking forward to seeing all of our pupils next week.

Yours sincerely

*Alicia Cook*