



**Customer Services: Education**  
Executive Director: Douglas Hendry

**Executive Head Teacher:**  
Peter Bain MA (Hons), MSc.

**Oban High School / Àrd-Sgoil an Obain**  
**Tiree High School / Àrd-Sgiol Thiriodh &**  
**Tiree Primary School / Bun-Sgiol Thiriodh**  
[enquiriesobanhigh@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:enquiriesobanhigh@argyll-bute.gov.uk)  
[enquirie@tiree.argyll-bute.sch.uk](mailto:enquirie@tiree.argyll-bute.sch.uk)

2<sup>ND</sup> August 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

I hope that you and your loved ones are all well. I also hope you are continuing to have a good summer, despite the weather and obvious Covid restrictions upon us all.

Please find some introductory comments prior to our return to school. More detailed information will follow next week. As always, the letter is sub-divided to allow you to choose which sections are relevant to you. Previous letters can be found on the website. The video version will be posted on our YouTube channel tomorrow for those who prefer to listen to the messages.

Oban

<http://www.obanhigh.argyll-bute.sch.uk/>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqVauXoUp5efv8sm1zBk0ig>

Tiree

<http://www.tiree.argyll-bute.sch.uk/>

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQY\\_wWuHth18JUUh6tBhHcGA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQY_wWuHth18JUUh6tBhHcGA)

Thanks

May I begin by publically thanking all the staff who have continued to work in our schools throughout the summer. Our support staff, office staff, technicians, janitors, cleaners and managers have all been in, supporting youngsters throughout the summer holidays and/or making sure the schools are ready to welcome all the remaining staff and of course all our pupils back to school.

Scottish Government update

As I noted in my last letter to you all at the end of last session, we have been awaiting guidance from the Scottish Government about returning to school. The delay in this guidance has been necessitated by the need for the Government to see the impact on the rate of Covid cases arising from the relaxation of restrictions. Good news. The First Minister confirmed on Thursday that all schools can now open on the 11<sup>th</sup> August and that all pupils must return by the 18<sup>th</sup> August.

You can find the guidance paper that all schools and Local Authorities are to follow below. I say "paper" but in reality there are over 60 additional papers linked to this single 49 page document.

This link will take you to both the full document and the 4 page summary:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-preparing-start-new-school-term-august-2020/>

Now that this guidance has been issued, Local Authority Recovery Groups can meet to develop guidance for all schools which reflect our local context. This Local Authority guidance will then help schools to develop a more detailed return to school plan over the course of the following week.

I have recalled the school managers back in from tomorrow, Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Working with the Local Authority Recovery Work-streams, Trade Unions; Health and Safety; Education Transport, School Hostel, Care Commission, Catering and Cleaning service; and facilities Management staff, we will amend the current blended learning re-opening plans (shared with you before the Summer) to take account of the Government Guidance just issued. I am aware this does not give much time but given we only just received the Government guidance and we still have to meet with all those I have mentioned, it's simply not possible to provide the level of detail we would all wish immediately.

### Basic Summary

The Risk Assessment needs amended first. This is being done now and will be placed on the school website tomorrow and we welcome comment from staff, pupils and parents.

The timetable for Oban High School needs re-written in part. The Tiree Primary School and Tiree High School timetable will remain the same (the Nursery timetable is to be confirmed). As you can see from the guidance, we expect all pupils to return to school but we also need to socially distance them as much as possible. We are looking at keeping the blended timetable for S4-6 and re-writing the S1-3 timetable with less movement and the introduction of 'sessions' as opposed to 45 minute periods. Teachers will have to move as much as possible, not pupils. Breaks and lunches will be split; year groups will dine separately.

As has been made clear in the documentation, we must be ready to return to a blended model should there be a resurgence in Covid cases. As much as Scotland's numbers are low just now, we are aware we are following a proportional pattern to that of England but a few weeks behind. We can see the resurgence there, it may be we see a similar pattern here – hopefully not! Further, there are predictions that there may be a resurgence in the winter. This third timetable adaptation will allow for an easier return to a blended delivery if the worse were to happen, whilst still allowing a fair degree of social distancing with little impact on the curriculum.

### Pupils' Return to school

We are aware that our new S1s have not had the same level of transitional support as would normally be the case. We are also aware that we have youngsters, many of them vulnerable or anxious about returning to school whose parents have asked for a phased, more "soft start" return. Additionally, we have youngsters within our Support Department who require a transition back into school. The First Minister, followed by our Director of Education has noted that pupils will begin to return to school on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August but that a phased return may be required between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>. All schools must submit their plans for any phased return to the Local Authority before this coming Thursday.

I can confirm that ALL children will be back in school together no later than Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August.

### New Normal

Both staff and pupils have been out of school for a considerable time. We are not returning to normal. We cannot expect staff or pupils to walk back in and pick up the pace as if nothing had

happened. Our focus will be on first re-establishing our relationships with pupils and helping pupils to re-establish relationships with their peers. It will be on creating a sense of calm and re-assurance that schools are safe places to be and to be sympathetic to the concerns of both pupils and staff. Thereafter we will need to establish where each pupil is on their learning journey; who has benefitted from the work we delivered home during lockdown and who has found that mode of learning more difficult. However, it is entirely natural for a teacher to walk into a class on day one and find their pupils all at different levels. We will use our professional knowledge, skills and experiences to work with our pupils and get them on track to achieve their full potential: and just as it is every year, this will take time.

### SQA

#### **To all our pupils: We wish you all the best for Tuesday!!**

I would like to congratulate all our pupils who did very well in the recent exams. Our youngsters may not have sat their final exam but they did have to put in a lot of effort to their studies throughout the year and this is to be commended. Of course, this year was very different from all previous years and the SQA has adopted a new model for certification. Recognising this model is untested and that there may be discrepancies between the school estimates and the statistical model applied to the passes awarded, and to ensure fairness, the SQA have re-introduced appeals for the first time in many years. The SQA will send us a list of those eligible for any appeals. Our Guidance staff will contact any pupils on the list.

The Clan support teams will be on hand to support pupils with advising on their results and possible resourcing next week from Wednesday. Skills Development Scotland careers staff will also support youngsters.

Full details for our return will be published next Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> August. However, remember if there is anything at all you wish to ask us about, or require support with, please contact your child's Guidance Teacher in Oban or Mrs Cooney in Tiree.

School contact address

Oban

<http://www.obanhigh.argyll-bute.sch.uk/contact>

Tiree

[enquiries-tireehigh@argyll-bute.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries-tireehigh@argyll-bute.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully



**P A Bain**

**Executive Head Teacher**

**Oban High School, Tiree High School & Tiree Primary School**