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Your Ref

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Dear Parent/Carer

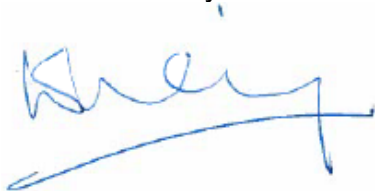
Firstly, a very warm welcome back to everyone in Aberdeenshire schools after the October break. Last term was certainly unique in so many aspects as we all learned to live with Covid-19 and respond to the many changes required as a result of the advice and guidance issued to schools and local authorities by Scottish Government and Public Health. I would like to say a very genuine thank you to all my colleagues for all they have done to adapt to the new ways of working. The efforts shown by colleagues across Aberdeenshire has been outstanding. I would also like to thank parents, carers and the young people themselves for also showing great adaptability in settling into a very different version of school life. I made a few school visits before the break and on the whole, I received very positive feedback on how both young people and their parents/carers were responding to the changes, so your ongoing support is greatly appreciated.

As we move into the winter months, we are already aware of concerns around an increase in Covid cases as well as the seasonal colds and other illnesses which come about at this time of year. We are carefully monitoring staff attendance levels and supply availability to ensure service continuity over the months ahead. In terms of recruitment, this year we plan to employ additional teaching staff through additional funding received from Scottish Government. Indeed, this recruitment is already underway with additional teachers already appointed in some areas. Additional support staff have also been recruited to support schools.

Last week, the First Minister announced a new Strategic Framework for Covid-19 across Scotland, with new tiers introduced in ongoing attempts to suppress the virus. As this Framework comes into being and has an impact on advice for schools, then we will send further updates to parents.

I wish you and your families all the very best for the term ahead and thank you for your continued support of our schools at this time.

Yours sincerely



**Laurence Findlay**  
**Director of Education & Children's Services**