



**EDUCATION, PEOPLE & BUSINESS
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FOR THE ATTENTION OF PARENTS/CARERS

E-mail through Group Call

Dear Parent/Carer

UPDATE ON THE RECOVERY PLANNING FOR THE REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

We understand that this is a difficult and uncertain time for parents/carers and children, so we want to provide you with an update on the planning for the reopening of schools in August 2020.

We are planning for a blended model of learning - this means that children will have some time in school as well as home learning. Guidance and support has been provided to Head Teachers by the central Education team as well as other teams across the Council.

There are a number of key principles that are informing our approach to recovery planning.

Firstly, the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and children is at the heart of decision-making; this includes the incorporation of measures to support physical distancing within schools and ways to mitigate the risk of infection and transmission.

The first priority has been to assess the capacity of each primary and secondary school, taking account of the need to use 2 metre distancing to assess learning spaces. Head Teachers have been supported by Officers from Education, Health & Safety and Assets on this.

In primary school, we require to organise children into small, consistent groups. Younger children, especially those in the early stages, find physical distancing difficult and, at all stages of the primary school, children work co-operatively in groups. Measures will be in place to support physical distancing but small, consistent groups mitigates the risk of infection and transmission. Steps will be taken to increase separation in all areas of the school and time for outdoor learning will be planned for all classes. In schools with high occupancy levels, we are working with Head Teachers to consider how the accommodation can be used to create nurturing learning environments. We are reviewing the staffing within each school and additional staffing will be allocated, if required. Head Teachers are working to ensure that family groups attend on the same day.

In secondary schools, it is more complex and work is underway to assess the capacity of each school to ensure physical distancing in all areas as it is not possible to create small, consistent groups of children within a secondary school. A timetable will then be put in place for children's attendance in-school. We are considering ways to further support home learning, particularly for those young people in the Senior Phase who are studying for national qualifications.

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In all schools there will be a robust risk assessment in place, which has been compiled by the Council's Health & Safety Team, taking account of the guidance from Scottish Government and NHS Public Health. Head Teachers are working to apply this risk assessment within their school. There will be a common approach in all schools with the provision of hand sanitisers, cleaning materials and signage to reinforce social distancing and the hygiene requirements. There will also be training for all staff when the schools reopen in August. Full details of this will be provided for parents/carers in order that they feel confident in their child returning to school.

The Recovery Plan for each school will include the planning of the in-school and home learning elements. Schools are working with their Parent Council to take account of the views of parents/carers to inform the further development of approaches. We recognise the impact that the lockdown has had on children and families so nurture approaches will be at the heart of our provision.

We also recognise the need for a flexible approach to meet the changing context; the situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic means we may have to adapt the provision with increasing or decreasing time in school as the next session develops.

The Council is also required to provide childcare for the children of key workers, both across the summer holidays and in the new school session and we are working to put plans in place for this. We will provide more information once this is confirmed, including the application process.

Scottish Government have now issued the approval for some school visits to support transitions. These will be organised by Head Teachers starting next week; priority will be given to those children who are due to start in Primary 1 and those transferring to S1. Transition arrangements will also be made for children with additional support needs. Parents will be contacted by their child's school as soon as the details have been finalised.

Each school will provide more detailed information before the end of June and keep you updated throughout the summer. Information in relation to early years will be provided by Scottish Government next week and we will then progress our planning of the provision of early learning and childcare.

We would like to thank you for your understanding and support during this challenging time and to assure you of our commitment to working in partnership with you to deliver learning and support for all our children and families.

Yours sincerely



JACQUI MACDONALD
Chief Education Officer

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