



EAST LoTHIAN COUNCIL

DUNBAR PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Headteacher: Mrs H Gillanders

Thursday 4th June 2020
Dear Parents and Carers

I am very aware that following the First Ministers announcement last week regarding schools returning in August, you will have many questions and possibly some concerns. I want to reassure you that as a school team we are currently working hard to find safe and sensible solutions to suit the pupils, parents and staff at Dunbar Primary School and Nursery.

We are exploring how we can realistically fit in classrooms our pupils, whilst maintaining the required 2m social distancing requirements. We are trying to find the best workable solution for pupils attending for face to face teaching with their teachers. We are also setting up lots of ways to ensure the health and safety of our pupils and staff.

At the moment the school is still running as a Hub for Key Worker and vulnerable pupils and next week we will start the process of allowing teachers back into both campuses to set up their new classrooms, but in a very different way for August. Most of our staff will be working in the Hub until the end of term and also continuing to teach and maintain contact with their children on Google Classrooms.

School is busy but not in the way I would really like it to be right now. I am truly sorry that for many of our pupils they will have missed key moments in their school life – P7 show and leaver's disco, our 'Clap Out' ceremonies for P3 and P7. Our Nursery parents and children missed their Nursery Graduations, The Cove missed their Summer Picnic, the P5s did not get their John Muir Award week, everyone missed out on Sports Days and the transitions that we had carefully planned have not taken place. Every one of us at DPS are missing our pupils – but I wanted to write to share that we are getting ready for seeing them in August.

I hope to be able to send out details of teachers and classes for the new term later on next week. It is slightly delayed as I am currently waiting to be notified of our new Newly Qualified Teachers names, as I think is only fair that everyone gets to know the name of their teacher on this letter.

The Scottish Government is still sending out guidance and advice to schools in relation to the arrangements for the start of school in August. As soon as I am able to I will write to you with details regarding these arrangements so you are able to prepare your son/daughter. Whilst we will try to keep family groupings together, it will not be possible to accommodate the individual circumstances and requirements of every family.

Finally, I would really like to say 'thank you' to you and your children. I have been so impressed with the way in which everyone has accepted the school moving 'online' and the creativity, commitment and fun shown by our pupils has been fantastic. Each of you as parents and carers have played vital part in ensuring we were able to continue to provide learning opportunities; you have been superstars in my eyes and I am delighted that we have such dedicated and supportive parents, carers and grandparents – Well Done!

We understand that you are anxious to know what this will mean for your family and we will be in touch with you in the coming weeks with full details. We would ask for your patience at this challenging time.

I have included a message from Lesley Brown, Chief Operating Officer for Education, which gives the East Lothian Council message regarding the arrangements moving forward.

Yours sincerely
Helen Gillanders

Update on Children's Hubs and teachers' return to schools

Following the announcement from the First Minister last week (28 May 2020) that Scotland has entered Phase 1 of its recovery route map, East Lothian Council has issued an update on what this means for its Children's Hubs and schools. More details will be published in the coming weeks as further information is made available by the national Education Recovery Group.

Chief Operating Officer for Education Lesley Brown said: "Our Hubs were welcomed by the families who have been eligible for this provision. It has allowed our keyworkers to continue with their essential roles and provided stability and support for their children while they do so. As our staff return to schools we must look at how we can combine the requirements to continue to provide this emergency childcare, plan for a new and very different academic year, and continue to support distance learning. Children currently attending the six Children's Hubs will move to their own school for childcare during June. Parents are being informed about this change and the arrangements being put in place to support their child.

"Learning from the Hubs has also been helpful to us as we establish new routines and practices and this experience will be vital as we move forward."

Teachers return to school

Head Teachers have already begun planning for the reopening of school buildings in June. From 8 June, they will be putting in place arrangements for school staff to have access to the building as required to start planning for the new school session. Throughout June, schools will also continue to provide distance learning and support for children. The Education Service will be surveying parents in the coming weeks, to gather their views about the reopening of schools.

Children's Hubs

As more school buildings open and education staff return to their own schools, the Children's Hubs providing emergency childcare for keyworkers' and vulnerable children will close. Children will instead move to receive support within their normal school setting from 8 June. This further provides those children an opportunity to become reacclimatised to their surroundings and re-establish relationships with their usual teaching team. It will also enable the council to provide more spaces for children who are considered vulnerable.

Schools remain closed to all other pupils.

Summer holiday provision

Plans are well underway to offer keyworkers' children and vulnerable families' spaces at summer holiday provision offered in four centralised locations. Spaces will be limited only for keyworkers who will be required to work over the summer break, require emergency childcare and have no alternative provision. As with the Easter holidays, this will be led by staff from across the council and will focus on fun activities such as outdoor play, arts and crafts, and music. Families already attending Hubs will be invited to apply for summer holiday provision.