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Phased Return to School

I hope that you and your family are well and that you had lots of fun in the snow during the February half term break! I enjoyed walking my dogs, who both enthusiastically ran, jumped and chased each other through the deepest snow they could find. However, the removal of giant snowballs from 2 cocker spaniels that followed – not so much fun.

First Minister's Announcement

On Tuesday 16th February 2021, due to the progress being made to suppress the virus, the Scottish Government has confirmed the decision to reopen school on a phased return from Monday 22nd February 2021. The guidance states that children within Nursery and P1-P3 class will return to school first, and P4-P7 children would continue to access their learning through remote learning methods and strategies. However, an exception has been made for schools with under 25 pupils, and 1 teacher supporting them in 1 multi – composite class. Therefore we are delighted that we can **welcome all our learners** from P2-P7 back to school on Monday 22nd February.

As we all work together to try to come to terms with the impact of the pandemic and the challenges to our daily lives, as parents and carers you might be feeling a little anxious about your child's return to school. Please be reassured that the safety of our families, learners and staff is paramount in all of our decision-making. We continually strive to follow and implement all advice, guidance and expectations that we receive from the Scottish Government, NHS Scotland and East Lothian Council. If you have any worries, queries or concerns that you would like to discuss further regarding the systems we have in place to ensure our school continues to be safe to our learners and staff, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Safety Measures to Support the Return of Learners to School

I want to reassure you that our priority is to ensure the safe return of learners to school. We continue to follow all National and Local Authority advice and guidance, and place health and safety at the heart of our plans, ensuring risk assessments and infection prevention and control measures are in place.

Risk Assessments

Our Risk Assessments are regularly reviewed and shared with all staff. Enhanced health and safety measures and protocols that follow the current public health and government guidance are rigorously implemented. These include observing the age-appropriate physical distancing measures outlined by current government guidance as well as public health advice to help reduce the spread of the virus, guidance on handwashing and hygiene, use of PPE, updated fire safety arrangements and use of transport

Enhanced Cleaning Arrangements

We will continue to implement an enhanced cleaning regime. Areas considered 'high touch' including toilets, door handles, bannisters and other surfaces in constant use, will be cleaned regularly to ensure high standards of cleanliness. Hand sanitisers will be at all entrances and in all appropriate areas across our school to enable learners and staff to hand sanitise regularly.

Face Masks, Face Coverings and PPE

East Lothian Council has reviewed the expectations related to the wearing of face masks as part of our enhanced measures to provide reassurance to families, children and staff. Staff will continue to wear face masks at all times when moving around the school and when working with our children. Any necessary visitors to our school will also be expected to wear a face covering at all times whilst on the school site; the main building and the playground. Parents and carers are also requested to wear face masks at drop off and pick up times, whilst in the playground.

COVID-19 Asymptomatic Testing Programme for School Staff

The implementation of our new Schools Asymptomatic Testing Programme for Scotland's schools has been implemented this week. Regular testing of staff will help to further reduce risks for staff, children and young people in our school and will support the work to keep our school and community safe.

Reducing the risk of possible transmission of Covid-19

In partnership with NHS Scotland, East Lothian Council implements a robust protocol to report any suspected COVID cases. Clear guidance and procedures are shared with schools. To support us in reducing the risk of virus transmission, parents and carers must **NOT** send their child to school if they display any of the common symptoms:

- New continuous cough
- Fever/ high temperature
- Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia)

If your child arrives at school displaying any of these symptoms, or becomes unwell during the school day, we will contact you and ask that you to make arrangements to have your child collected **immediately**.

If your child/young person is showing symptoms while at home.

If your child is showing any symptoms of Covid-19, **please do not send them to school**. You should inform the school office of their absence, in the usual way.

Next Steps

Whether your child has developed symptoms at school or at home it is essential that you arrange a test for your child. This can be done online at www.nhsinform.scot or call 0800 028 2816. Your son/daughter should then isolate, at home, until they receive a result. They can only return to school if they have a negative result from this test.

Self-isolating due to suspected or confirmed Covid-19 in the household

If a member of your household is showing symptoms then your child must remain at home and self-isolate until either the member of your household has received a negative test result, or for 10 days if the test provides a positive result. You should report your child's absence to school in the normal way and follow all self-isolation guidance from NHS Inform. If a member of your household receives a positive test then all members of your household including your child/young person must self-isolate for 10 days. The isolation period includes the date of your last contact with them and the next ten full days. They do not need to be tested unless they have symptoms. Further information is available at www.nhsinform.scot

Self-isolating following a contact from Test and Protect

If you have to isolate because you have been contacted by Test and Protect please clarify with them the impacts on your child's school attendance. Current guidance states that only direct contacts need to self-isolate. If your child was in direct contact with someone who has tested positive, then they should also self-isolate. If not, they can return to school, providing that they and or the other members of the household are not displaying symptoms.

Learning at home during self-isolation

We recognise that periods of self-isolating can be disruptive to a child's learning. If your child is ill there is no expectation that they would continue to participate in any learning and instead should focus on returning to full health. If they are self-isolating as a precautionary measure we can arrange for work to be provided online to complete at home. We will discuss this with you at the time if required.

School Closure due to Covid-19

Two or more confirmed cases of Covid-19 in 10 days, or an increase in absence as a result of possible Covid-19, may be considered as an outbreak. If this is the case we will work with the council, and local Health Protection Team on the next steps. A decision to close the school would only be taken if it was considered absolutely necessary.

Further information

Further information is included on the council's website and this will continue to be updated: www.eastlothian.gov.uk/backtoschool Further guidance on this can be found on the NHS Inform website: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>

Bringing your child to school

The arrangements for Parents and Carers to drop off and collect children continues to be an important factor in reducing the risk of transmitting the virus. We must continue to be vigilant in maintaining 2m physical distancing between adults and children from different households. In order to effectively achieve this, we will continue to have soft starts to the school day, and staggered finish times to end the day. This will allow us to carefully manage the movement of learners and adults across the school site.

- Arrive at school as close to your child's start time/ pick up time, spending as little time in the playground as possible and avoid meeting with other households.
- Please follow the one-way system.
- Wherever possible only one parent or carer brings their child to school to minimise contact in school playground.
- Continue to maintain 2m social distancing from all adults and children out with your household.

- Adults and carers should wear face-coverings whilst just outside the school playground.
- If your child arrives late at school, please bring them to the school office, where a member of staff will welcome them into school.

Unfortunately during the current pandemic, and following Scottish Government guidance, we cannot permit families, parents and carers into our school unless in exceptional circumstances.

What should my child bring to School?

- We will continue to operate a 'soft start' in the morning – children can arrive at school between 8.40am and 8.55am. The children will enter and leave school through their usual door – a member of staff will be there to greet them in the morning.
- **Children will leave at their normal times.**
- Children should bring a named water bottle with them every day to school.
- Children should always bring a coat as we will try to take learning outdoors whenever possible.
- A playtime snack can be sent and kept in a jacket pocket.
- A pair of indoor shoes that can be left in school

What not to bring.....

- Scooters or bikes
- Toys/items from home
- School bags

What if I need to speak to my child's teacher?

We understand that there may be times that you need to pass on information, or ask a question of your child's teacher. However, to ensure that we maintain social distancing, and minimise contact of adults from different households, we ask that unless it is a very brief message, that you phone the school office in the first instance. Please leave a brief message with Ms Brown, and we will ensure that either Mrs Pearson, Ms Weddell or I will contact you at the earliest opportunity. I know this is hard, and that a wee chat can sometimes be the easiest way to pass on information, but we must all work together to minimise the interaction of adults from different households, and play our part in reducing the wider risks to our school and community. We thank you in advance for your understanding and support in this matter.

Lunches

School lunches are now available to order online in the usual way for your child. Please log in to your SchoolPay account to view and support your child to view and choose their menu options for the week. Please name your child's lunch bag/box if they are bringing a packed lunch. Please also include any cutlery they require for their lunch e.g. spoon for yogurt.

Transport

Transport arrangements will recommence as of Monday 22nd February 2021 with AC's Taxi's. Social Distancing does not apply to primary transport but all children should wear face coverings while travelling.

School Uniform

Where possible, we continue to encourage all children to wear school uniform, however during this time there is a relaxed attitude to dress code. School uniform/clothing should be washed/cleaned as normal. School uniform can continue to be ordered through our school office.

At this time children will not be encouraged to change for PE. We advise that on day's children have PE they come to school dressed in sportswear. During this time, PE will continue to take place outdoors.

Recovery Curriculum

All our learners are aware of, or have been affected by the recent Lockdown in some way. As a response to the Covid-19 Pandemic our curriculum delivery has been temporarily reshaped to ensure the safety and recovery of our whole school community. Health and Wellbeing learning experiences will be at the heart of our learning and teaching experiences alongside a strong focus upon literacy and numeracy.

Finally...

Finally – a wee word of reassurance. Our children have shown incredible resilience and patience throughout this last year and have coped amazingly well despite all the challenges that we face. However if you have concerns about how your child might be coping with events that are happening around them – please phone us, chat with us and we can work together to try to find a way to help. The same request goes out to you – our families, parents and carers. It has been an incredibly challenging time for all of us. If you need someone to talk to – please do not hesitate to contact us – sometimes a chat is all that is needed, but together we can get through this.

I finish by apologising for the length of this letter, but hope to offer reassurance about your child's return to school and to give you as much information that we can share with you at this time. I thank you all for your ongoing support for our school, staff and community and look forward to when we can all be together again.

Take care and stay safe.

Debby Crossan

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Head Teacher