



27 June 2020

Dear Pupils, Parents and Carers

I am writing to confirm the arrangements for our return to school after the summer holiday. Following the Depute First Minister's announcement on Tuesday, the Scottish Government has now asked us to prepare for all pupils returning to school full-time from 12 August 2020, assuming it is safe to do so. At the time of writing we are awaiting further detailed guidance to be provided to all local authorities, including on issues such as physical distancing and transportation. Relevant information will be shared with you over the summer holiday so that you have full details on our plans for the start of the new school session.

We have also been asked by Scottish Government to ensure that we have contingency plans in place in case the virus rates increase again in the coming months, meaning that full-time schooling is not possible. Throughout June, we have been working on a recovery plan which takes account of 2m and 1m physical distancing. **Please note that, following the Scottish Government's announcement, this is now our contingency plan, or Plan B. We now expect our children to return full-time from 12 August and that is our Plan A.** While I hope that we will never have to put our Plan B into action, I think it is important to share that plan with you. Doing so means that you will know the impact on your household should health and government advice change over the summer holiday, necessitating a move to a blended learning model. It will also enable you to plan for any impact, should that be required.

Again, I emphasise that the reason for sharing these contingency plans with you now is so that you know what the impact would be only if the Scottish Government decides that full-time schooling will not be possible in August. We all hope that this will not be the case as we are looking forward to welcoming all our young people back to school full-time after the summer.

I appreciate that the uncertainty about the return in August is challenging for us all, but I would like to reassure everyone in our school community that we are doing our utmost to prepare for all eventualities, while prioritising the health and wellbeing and the safety of our pupils and staff. We will be undertaking careful planning over the summer to ensure that we can support all of our young people as they readjust to our buildings and the changes that may have been made. Our school had already completed all the necessary work to restructure classrooms, introduce hand sanitising stations, put in place arrangements to manage lunch and break-times and, of course, instigate cleaning regimes that would ensure high levels of hygiene. School meals will be in the form of packed lunches for the first few weeks of the session. All of our preparatory work, and the views you shared with us during the parental survey, will still be very useful for a safe return to school.

We appreciate that some families will have health conditions and situations that will mean a return to school, in any form, would not be safe for individual pupils. Again, we await further clarification from the Scottish Government on how this should be addressed. This will form part of our future communications to you.

This term has presented East Lothian's school communities and families with a number of challenges and we are very grateful for your support and resilience, and for the patience you have shown. I want to give you a commitment that we will keep you updated over the summer with any relevant information as we receive it.

If you have any specific questions about the detail of this letter, please do contact us via [communications@northberwickhigh.elcschool.org.uk](mailto:communications@northberwickhigh.elcschool.org.uk). I have to say I am really keen to see all of our young people back at NBHS as soon as is safely possible. I know that the staff, like me, are looking forward to welcoming our pupils back into the school building in August, as well as welcoming our new S1s to NBHS for the first time. I sincerely hope that we return to a more positive health environment in August.

Until then, please do take care and stay safe.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lauren Rodger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lauren Rodger  
Head Teacher

## Safety

Comprehensive **risk assessments** will be finalised over the summer break, prior to pupils returning to school. These will be approved by East Lothian Council, taking account of up-to-date Government advice.

Thorough **cleaning** will take place at the start and end of each day and communal areas, such as toilets and dining facilities, will be cleaned during the day. At the end of each lesson, work areas will be wiped clean by staff and pupils prior to the arrival of a new class.

Regular **hand sanitising/hand washing** is critical. All pupils will use hand sanitiser on arrival at every classroom and on departing. Hand sanitiser will be used by every pupil at the start and end of break and lunchtime. Soap dispensers in toilets will be checked regularly and warm water will always be available. Physical distancing will be ensured through sensitive supervision of communal toilet areas. Accessible toilets with hand washing facilities will also be available to all pupils. Hand sanitiser will be available in each classroom and pupils who wish to bring their own hand sanitiser to school may do so.

Under current Scottish Government guidance, the wearing of **face coverings** is not considered necessary in schools; however, pupils are welcome to do so if they wish. Some of our staff may also choose to wear face coverings.

We will clearly follow the Scottish Government's **Test and Protect** advice (Test, Trace, Isolate and Support). We will also have a self-isolation room in the school for pupils or staff who show symptoms, and we will arrange for them to be picked up from school as soon as possible.

All **classrooms** have been checked to ensure that appropriate physical distancing can be put in place, and in August desk arrangements and floor tape will support this physical distancing. Classrooms will be kept well-ventilated, with open windows and doors wherever possible. Increased outdoor learning will also be planned, wherever possible. Pupils should therefore always bring an outdoor jacket to school.

The sharing of **resources**, such as pens, books or computers will be minimised; pupils will be asked, where possible, to bring their own materials in and out of school. Further information is available on page 6.

Some **shared facilities**, such as our PE changing rooms, water fountains and school lockers, will not be available on return. Pupils should bring their own bottled water.

If 2 metre physical distancing is still in place in August, **temporary class sizes** will be a maximum of 10 pupils. If 1 metre physical distancing is introduced, those class sizes will rise to around 15 pupils. There will be some exceptions to this: for example, we may use larger spaces such as our Assembly Hall to accommodate larger classes; and some practical classrooms will still only be able to accommodate a smaller number of pupils for some activities.

**Movement** throughout the school will be minimised and, where possible, teachers will move between classrooms, rather than pupils moving. We will operate a one way-system throughout the school which pupils and staff will have to follow at all times.

In rare circumstances physical distancing will not be possible, such as supporting the personal care of pupils with additional support needs, or during medical treatment. In such circumstances, staff will wear appropriate **PPE** at all times.

## The School Day

The **arrival and departure** of pupils will be carefully managed to ensure consistent hand washing or hand sanitising. Timings of the school day may have to be adapted once school transport arrangements are clear.

Apart from S6, pupils will not be allowed to leave the school campus during **break and lunchtime**. This approach is being taken in all East Lothian schools. Pupils will be encouraged to use the school grounds, for fresh air and to reduce contact. There will be supervision of these areas. Break and lunch time will be staggered to minimise contact and reduce queues for those who need to pick up food from our canteen. A 'Grab and Go' food service will operate at lunchtime in our canteen; hot meals will not be served. There will not be a canteen service at break time, so pupils must bring their own morning snack. Pupils who are able to bring their own packed lunch to school will be encouraged to do so. Pupils in receipt of free school meals will be able to use our canteen service as normal. Social and eating areas will be supervised and physical distancing will be maintained. If the weather is good, pupils will be encouraged to eat lunch outside, while maintaining physical distancing.

**Behavioural Expectations** will be very high, and pupils must cooperate fully with physical distancing guidelines and school rules to ensure staff and pupil safety. We ask parents and carers to stress the importance of this to their child. Our staff will advise and support pupils on how to get this right, but if a pupil fails to follow guidelines, and thus compromises the safety of others, the pupil will carry out their learning entirely at home until we are certain it is safe for them to return to school.

East Lothian Council staff are still finalising **transport** plans. Wherever possible, pupils will be encouraged to walk or cycle to school. For those pupils who require transport, a letter will come directly from Transport Services during the summer clarifying arrangements for returning to school. Physical distancing will reduce spaces on school buses and parents and carers may wish to make new travel arrangements for their child. To avoid congestion around the school area, pupils receiving a lift to school should be dropped off at some distance from the school, for example in the Recreation Ground car park.

Our **fire evacuation** arrangements will be reviewed over the summer and new procedures will be communicated to all staff and pupils during the welcome and reconnect days in school in August.

**Parents, carers and visitors** will not be able to enter the school building until the national COVID-19 recovery programme reaches Phase 4. Until that point, all communication will be by telephone or email and any meetings will be held virtually. It is vital, therefore, that we have up-to-date email addresses for all parents and carers, so please contact [admin@northberwickhigh.elcschool.org.uk](mailto:admin@northberwickhigh.elcschool.org.uk) with any updates.

Parents who need to contact their child during the school day should call the school office as usual and should not phone their child on their mobile phone, to avoid disruption to learning and teaching.

## Learning

With 2 (or 1) metre physical distancing in place, we cannot accommodate all pupils in the building at the same time so we will use a 'blended learning' approach. This is quite different from the online learning currently taking place because most pupils will experience some learning face-to-face in school; this will be 'blended' with online learning at home.

**In-school learning** time will be maximised in line with Scottish Government advice on physical distancing. In the week before schools return, we will share more detailed plans, and pupils will receive an interim timetable on their first day back in school.

Our temporary S1 - S2 curriculum will allow pupils to experience the full range of subjects. However, because of reduced class sizes and reduced numbers of staff able to attend school, time allocations for each subject will, inevitably, vary from our normal model. Likewise, staff availability means that pupils may not be taught by the same teachers they will have when our normal timetable resumes.

In S3 - S6, pupils will study their chosen subjects. As usual, some S4 - S6 pupils will need or wish to be re-coursed. Re-coursing conversations will take place remotely on return in August.

**Home Learning** will complement in-school learning through Google Classroom. To support pupils unable to attend school, all class learning will be presented through Google Classrooms. Pupils must commit fully to home learning to ensure they make appropriate progress; we ask all parents and carers to establish a focused home learning routine with their child. Creating a study space or area at home is vital, even if that has to be a shared area, such as a kitchen table. Our Pupil Support staff will work to remove any barriers to effective in-school or home learning. Getting to grips with blended learning may actually better prepare pupils for the world beyond school, where such approaches are common.

**Reporting on progress** will be different. Parents' evenings may not be possible for a while, unfortunately. This term, East Lothian secondaries were unable to provide student tracking reports due to technological limitations affecting staff working from home. However, once most staff are back in school we will be able to provide tracking reports as normal next session. A tracking, reporting and parents' evening calendar will be shared with parents and carers at the start of the new session. Tracking reports will include engagement with home learning. As always, if you require further information at any point in the school year, you can get in touch through your child's guidance teacher.

## What pupils should bring to school

We are trying as much as possible to reduce the amount of shared resources used in class. It is more important than ever that pupils have a **school bag** to bring items in and out of school. On the first day back tutors will check that all pupils have a suitable school bag.

The items that should be in the school bag are:

- pens/pencils/ruler/rubber/sharpener
- calculator
- full water bottle  
*(In line with government advice, our water fountains will not be operating in August.)*
- Chromebook or laptop, *only* if one can be brought in from home (see below)
- bottle of hand sanitiser
- outdoor jacket  
*(To maximise the possibility of safe - and warm! - outdoor learning.)*
- Optional: a packed lunch  
*(Canteen facilities will not be available at break time. Packed lunches will be available through Grab and Go.)*

### Pupils bringing their own devices to school

The Scottish Government has stated that financial support will be provided to ensure that no pupil is unable to access digital learning at home; however, the amount and nature of that support are not yet finalised.

To maximise digital access, East Lothian pupils will be encouraged to bring their own device to school in August if they can, and if it is agreed with their family. The responsibility for any such devices will be entirely in the hands of individual pupils. Any devices brought in must be fully charged, as we will be unable to provide charging facilities. The ideal device is a Chromebook, but all laptops would work well.

No pupil will be disadvantaged by this approach: we will provide all pupils with Chromebooks or PCs for any in-school digital learning that is required, and we will ensure all pupils have home access, too.

Mobile phones do not work well for learning in class and should remain switched off and in bags unless a teacher has agreed to their use. They may, however, be used during break or lunchtime.

## When pupils will come into school

We have planned a four-stage approach, which can be summarised as follows:

Stage	Weeks	Pupils in school	Notes
Stage 1	Weeks 1 and 2 12-20 August	one year group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 metre physical distancing</li> <li>• 'soft start', to allow us to engage with pupils and to outline new ways of working</li> <li>• S6 pupils supporting other year groups</li> </ul>
Stage 2	Week 3 onwards from 24 August	two year groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 metre physical distancing</li> <li>• maximum school capacity with 2m distancing</li> </ul>
Stage 3	to be confirmed	three year groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 metre physical distancing</li> <li>• maximum school capacity with 1m distancing</li> </ul>
Stage 4	to be confirmed	all year groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no distancing</li> <li>• school back to maximum capacity</li> </ul>

In common with other East Lothian schools, Fridays will be used flexibly to provide staff with time to support blended learning and to plan for this new way of working. Schools may also choose to support small groups of pupils in school on a Friday for a specific purpose.

### Stage 1

In this stage we will welcome and reconnect with one year group each day, focusing on wellbeing and next steps in learning. This will allow us to engage with pupils again and explain new systems and processes. Topics covered will include: hand-washing, physical distancing, one-way systems, breaks and lunches, arrival and departure and fire drills. Home learning will continue on days when pupils are not in school. From 13 August to 20 August, groups of S6 pupils will support the welcome and reconnecting of other year groups.

Stage 1: Returning to school, weeks 1 and 2		
Date	Day	Year groups
<b>Week 1</b>		
10 August	Monday	<i>Inservice</i>
11 August	Tuesday	<i>Inservice</i>
12 August	Wednesday	S6
13 August	Thursday	S1
14 August	Friday	Flexible
<b>Week 2</b>		
17 August	Monday	S5
18 August	Tuesday	S4
19 August	Wednesday	S3
20 August	Thursday	S2
21 August	Friday	Flexible

**Stage 2**

In Stage 2, more pupils will be in school each day. In order to maximise pupils' time in school, we have planned a continuing three-week programme, with a six-day cycle providing one day in school every three days for all year groups.

<b>Stage 2: Week 3 onwards, with 2m physical distancing (until change of distancing measure)</b>			
Date	Day		Year groups
<b>Week 3</b>			
24 August	Monday	1	S5 and S6
25 August	Tuesday	2	S1 and S4
26 August	Wednesday	3	S2 and S3
27 August	Thursday	4	S5 and S6
28 August	Friday		Flexible
<b>Week 4</b>			
31 August	Monday	5	S1 and S4
1 September	Tuesday	6	S2 and S3
2 September	Wednesday	1	S5 and S6
3 September	Thursday	2	S1 and S4
4 September	Friday		Flexible
<b>Week 5</b>			
7 September	Monday	3	S2 and S3
8 September	Tuesday	4	S5 and S6
9 September	Wednesday	5	S1 and S4
10 September	Thursday	6	S2 and S3
11 September	Friday		Flexible

**Stage 3**

We move to Stage 3 when the Scottish Government moves to 1m physical distancing. All pupils attend school two days every week, either Monday and Wednesday (Senior Phase) or Tuesday and Thursday (Broad General Education). Home learning will still complement in-school learning.

<b>Stage 3: From change to 1m physical distancing onwards</b>		
Date	Day	Year groups
<b>Each Week</b>		
tbc	Monday	S4 - S6
tbc	Tuesday	S1 - S3
tbc	Wednesday	S4 - S6
tbc	Thursday	S1 - S3
tbc	Friday	Flexible

**Stage 4**

All pupils in school. This will only be put in place when no physical distancing is required in Scottish schools.

**Stage 4: Normal timetable, no physical distancing**