

LB/HM

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Now that our children have returned to school after the October break, I would like to reiterate my thanks to you for your continued support and patience. Whilst it has been a challenging time for everyone, our children and young people, supported by our families and staff have adapted incredibly well to the different procedures which we have had to put in place across our school buildings to maintain teaching and learning and ensure everyone's health and safety is the top priority.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of updated guidance for schools, published on the Scottish Government's website, which seeks to minimise risk from COVID-19 and keep our schools and nurseries open and safe during this challenging period.

The newly-published guidance takes account of the latest scientific and public health advice, as well as the new levels of protection announced last week as part of the Scottish Government Strategic Framework, which sets out the required measures to reduce virus prevalence in particular parts of the country. On Thursday (29 October), the First Minister revealed that East Lothian Council would be placed in **tier 3** of the new Covid-19 protection levels.

Our schools are now working to implement this guidance as swiftly as possible from today, Monday, 2 November 2020.

More details on this can be found on the Scottish Government website but some of the key points are:

- At tier levels 3-4, face coverings should be worn in classrooms by senior phase (S4-S6) pupils and staff.
- Parents and other visitors should wear face coverings to the school or nursery site (whether entering the building or otherwise), including parents at drop-off and pick-up.
- Face coverings should be worn by staff where they cannot keep two metres apart from other adults and/or children in primary and secondary schools (some exceptions apply for P1-2).
- Face coverings should be used by staff and other adults across all school and nursery settings when not working directly with children, for example when moving around settings or when in staff rooms and administrative areas.

- Face coverings should continue to be worn whilst travelling on home to school transport.
- Those supporting children with Additional Support Needs who routinely have to work within two metres of children and young people should wear face coverings as a general rule.
- As winter approaches, the guidance asks that schools adopt strategies that help balance the need for ventilation with keeping people warm.
- Indoor Physical Education will now be permitted up to and including those in Tier 3 – it is not permitted in Tier 4.

While we are very much focused on keeping our schools open and safe, remote learning continues to be a contingency in the event that there is any future escalation in the seriousness of the COVID-19 outbreak and closures are required. Going forward, should learners be asked to self-isolate or a school move to a situation where it is required to close due to Public Health advice, the same underpinning assumptions will apply.

I hope this letter is helpful in summarising some of the key points in relation to the updated guidance we have received. By following the guidance as well as national public health advice, we can all play our part in tackling COVID-19. This virus will continue to be present challenges for some time to come, but together we will get through this difficult period.

Your child's school will provide further details on any specific arrangements that may be needed. In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact them should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely



Lesley Brown
Head of Education and Children's Services