

LB/HM

19 February 2021

John Muir House
Haddington
East Lothian
EH41 3HA
Tel 01620 827827

Dear Parent/Carer,

On Tuesday 16th February 2021, [the First Minister confirmed](#) that children in nursery to primary 3 would return to in-school learning from 22 February 2021, along with a small number of S4-S6 young people who require to access school facilities to undertake specific practical tasks. All other learners will continue with remote learning as they do presently, other than those that have a place in the in-school provision for children of keyworkers and those that are vulnerable.

I wanted to write to you to share some of the key principles arising from the Scottish Government guidance which has been updated this week and is intended to keep your children, our staff and our wider communities safe. In addition, schools will be in touch with you before the end of this week with the specific arrangements for each individual setting.

We are all pleased to see some of our children and young people return to our school buildings and the overall reductions in positive COVID case numbers that we are seeing nationally. However, the First Minister has made it clear that for this to continue, we must all play our part in reducing community transmission. This will be key to welcoming all of our learners back into school. With this in mind, we ask that all parents and carers avoid congregating outside school buildings at either end of the school day and that you follow the national FACTS guidance in relation to 2m physical distancing and wearing face coverings.

The latest Scottish Government guidance makes it clear that whilst schools are low risk environments, it is essential that the appropriate mitigations and safety measures are implemented consistently. These include:

- Ensuring 2m physical distancing and the use of face coverings remains critical amongst all staff and for S4 to S6 learners accessing school buildings. We ask that all families discuss the importance of adhering to 2m physical distancing and the need to wear face coverings in schools unless exempt.
- Continuing to ensure classrooms are well ventilated. Our school staff will balance the need for ventilation with the weather conditions however we continue to ask that all children and young people attend school with suitable clothing for indoor and outdoor learning.
- Some schools may continue to operate staggered start and end times to manage the numbers of people accessing the school building and your school will share details directly with you if this is the case.

- Wearing a face covering at all times remains a requirement for **all** children and young people using home-to-school transport (unless exempt) . Feedback from our transport operators suggests that not all young people are adhering to this requirement and are removing their face coverings during travel. We ask that you discuss the importance of this measure with your child as this remains a condition of travel.

Remote learning

For the majority of children, remote learning will continue to be the main method by which our schools will provide learning activities. Please be aware that with the return of some learners in to school buildings, our staff will need to manage the provision of in-school learning and remote learning and this may result in a change to how remote learning is delivered. Our schools will communicate their plans with you and please don't hesitate to contact them if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's learning, or if you need any further access to a digital device.

Senior phase learners

Our secondary staff are now planning which learners from S4 to S6 will be invited to attend school buildings to undertake practical tasks associated with their learning. We are operating under strict protocols to keep numbers as low as possible in our schools to minimise transmission risks. Therefore anyone accessing school buildings will have to adhere to 2m distancing and face coverings as a condition of attendance unless they have a specific medical exemption.

Schools will also communicate with you the arrangements for the introduction of mass asymptomatic testing for young people accessing school buildings which is being rolled out by the Scottish Government from this week.

Other in-school provision for children of key workers and vulnerable children

We have reopened the process for key workers to apply for places for in-school learning for those children that are not part of the phased return announced by the Scottish Government. Further information, including our criteria, is available online [through our consultation hub](#). In addition, schools are reviewing those children who are vulnerable and who would benefit from in-school provision in line with the updated Scottish Government guidance. If you have any enquiries about this, please contact your child's school.

Finally, this is reminder that all parents and carers should continue to report positive cases of Covid-19 through the covidinschools@eastlothian.gov.uk mailbox. We continue to be very grateful for everything you are doing throughout this challenging time and for the measures you are all taking to keep our communities safe.

Yours sincerely



Lesley Brown
Executive Director Education and Children's Services