

23rd September 2021

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

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you all had an enjoyable long weekend.

I am writing to update you on the latest version of the Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in schools which was updated last week along with a further update on curriculum charges.

COVID Guidance

This latest version sets out that local authorities and schools should continue to apply the mitigations that were in place at the end of last term until at least the October holidays, including the use of face coverings for secondary school pupils.

Information letters (previously called Warn and Inform letters) will be issued to low risk close contacts following a positive case of a pupil or staff member and those who receive these should be encouraged to take a lateral flow test before returning to school. This process is explained in more detail in the attached letter from National Clinical Director, Professor Jason Leitch, to all parents/carers of children in early learning settings, primary and secondary school which you may have already received from your child's school.

Other mitigations to be retained include one-way systems, staggered start and finish times, restrictions on assemblies and meetings of large groups and twice weekly asymptomatic testing for staff and secondary school pupils.

Non-essential visitors in schools will continue to be restricted, meaning that any forthcoming parental consultations will take place virtually.

As we continue to encounter staffing difficulties both in terms of school staff and facilities colleagues, the possibility of some classes/ year groups having to move to remote learning remains a risk, however as previously advised, this would only be as a last resort. I know that you will continue to be supportive of your child's school as they work hard to deliver the best possible experiences under challenging circumstances.

Curriculum Charges

On a different note, I would also like to update you on a Scottish Government commitment to remove charges to parents and carers which are related to the curriculum.

This includes:

- Classroom-based curriculum activities from P1 to S3
- Activities associated with the preparation for SQA qualifications in S4-S6, including (but not limited to):
 - all ingredients and materials required for home economics
 - all art materials
 - all materials required for design, manufacture and technology subjects
 - scientific calculators for secondary school pupils
 - Theatre trips associated with SQA drama qualifications.

This means that none of our children and young people will be disadvantaged by having to pay to access the curriculum, and that your child's school will not be asking you for payments for any of the above.

I would like to thank you all again for your support, patience and understanding at this challenging time, and hope that you and your family stay safe and well.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola McDowell', enclosed in a light grey rectangular box.

Nicola McDowell
Head of Education Services