



Education Resources
Executive Director **Tony McDaid**

Parent /Carer

Our ref: TMcD/DD
Your ref:
Phone Helpline: 0303 123 1023
Date: 3 August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Information Update – Schools reopening in August

Following the First Minister’s announcement on Thursday 30 July, I can confirm that our schools and nurseries will begin to reopen for children and young people from Wednesday 12 August. On behalf of all our school and early years’ teams I want to say how much we are looking forward to welcoming children and young people back into our schools and nurseries.

I understand fully that as parents/carers you may be anxious about your child’s return to school or nursery as we are all trying to come to terms with the impact of the pandemic which has challenged the way we now live our lives. I can tell you that national guidance developed by the Scottish Government to support a safe return to school for children, young people and staff taking full account of progress made in suppressing Covid19 in Scotland and on current scientific advice is now available. [New school term 2020 - advice and guidance](#)

The safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff is paramount, and the guidance states the balance of risk is now strongly in favour of children and young people returning to school full time.

Return dates

The national guidance highlights, that *we do not expect the return to school in August to be a return to normality*. Given that children and young people have not been in school since March, it is important that they have the opportunity to become familiar with the new layouts in their school, the hygiene practice of washing or sanitising their hands, arrangements for entering and exiting, lunch and interval breaks and new routines.

Tuesday 11 August will be an in-service day for staff with children and young people returning initially on a phased basis from **Wednesday 12 August**. This will support the transition and give everyone the opportunity to be welcomed back safely and is in line with Scottish Government advice. All children will return full time from **Monday 17 August**.

Primary schools, ASN Primary standalone schools and ASN Primary Bases suggested model:

- Wednesday 12 August P1 pupils only
- Thursday 13 August P1-P3 only
- Friday 14 August P4-P7 only
- Monday 17 August All children return to school

Please note: There may be some variations to this model depending on local contexts. Schools will confirm their final arrangements to you via social media to you by Wednesday 5 August to let you know what days your children will attend from the Wednesday 12 until Friday 14 August before all children return on Monday 17^h August.

Secondary schools, ASN Secondary standalone schools and ASN Secondary Bases

Secondary and ASN schools are looking at which year groups will attend on which days for the first



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week before all pupils return on a fulltime basis from Monday 17 August and they will let you know what this will be this week.

Early years

Nurseries are currently in the process of communicating start dates and settling in arrangements with families.

School Transport

It has been confirmed that children and young people can travel on dedicated school transport without the need for physical distancing and we will provide an update for you on the safety arrangements that will be put in place.

Guidance on transport for children with additional support needs is being developed based on national public health advice and further information will be provided before children return.

Safety measures to support return

Health and safety sits at the heart of our plans, with risk assessments and infection prevention and control measures in place. Hand sanitisers will be at the entrances and in all appropriate areas across schools. Secondary schools will have hand sanitisers available in all classrooms and in primary schools all classrooms with sinks will enable children to handwash regularly.

Enhanced cleaning routines will be implemented using products which are effective against bacteria and viruses and there will be clear signage throughout school buildings to reinforce the infection prevention and control measures in place.

We are also in regular contact with NHS Public Health Lanarkshire to ensure we are kept updated on the medical advice on personal safety and wellbeing.

I know that you will have many questions and our plan is to publish a question and answer leaflet prior to schools re-opening, based on the most recent health and scientific guidance we have recently received from the Scottish Government. This will be available on our website www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk as soon as possible.

I have also attached to this letter a short summary of some of the things that we have done and are required to do.

Return to school and nursery

All of our staff are very much looking forward to welcoming children and young people back into our schools and nurseries and to seeing and hearing from them on a face to face basis.

This has been an unprecedented and challenging time for everyone. Nevertheless, I would wish you to know that we have been working together with our colleagues in NHS and other council services to prepare as best we can for the re-opening of our schools and nurseries.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for all you have done to support your child's learning over the past four months which I know has not been easy. I also wish to thank our school and nursery staff, parent councils and wider council teams who have worked tirelessly to help put plans in place while reacting to what has been an ever-changing situation.

Take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely



Tony McDaid

Executive Director (Education Resources)

What matters to you, matters to us – some further advice

New measures to support return

A range of measures are in place within each of our schools and nurseries in line with Scottish Government guidance. I want to reassure you that while safety is the priority, we will do everything we can to reduce the impact of this on the school or nursery day and your child's learning experience. As all schools and nurseries are different, we feel that it is better you hear direct from them and they will contact you about any specific requirements.

However, there are standard measures in place for everyone:

- **Robust hygiene and cleaning procedures** have been introduced across all nurseries and schools. This includes regular hand washing and the cleaning of surfaces and equipment throughout the day. All nurseries and schools will be cleaned at the end of the school day.
- **Hand washing/cleaning** – on arrival into school or nursery, children will wash their hands before they settle into the centre, classroom or learning space. We also ask that children and young people wash their hands before they leave home in the morning. In secondary schools, this will involve the use of hand sanitisers.
- **Physical distancing** - as per the Scottish Government guidance, children and young people do not have to physically distance while in nursery, school or on school transport. However, we will encourage physical distancing where possible to further minimise any risk. In addition, we will avoid bringing children and young people together in large groups such as school events or assemblies. Physical distancing will also be in place between staff and children and young people where possible. Visitors coming into nurseries and schools will also be restricted and parents should not enter school buildings except in emergencies and are asked to contact the school or nursery direct in advance.
- **Lunch times** - may be staggered, where possible, to reduce children and young people queuing in large numbers. Children and young people can bring their own packed lunch. Hot meals will be provided, and menus published.
- **Home to school transport** provided by the council will continue as normal for eligible children and young people. They do not have to physically distance and will not need to wear face coverings. However, no food or drink should be consumed while on a school bus. For children and young people travelling on public transport, please follow Scottish Government guidance on face coverings and physical distancing.
- **Personal belongings** - Some restrictions will be in place in relation to personal belongings. Children at nursery should continue to bring a change of clothing but please avoid bringing toys from home where possible. Children and young people may bring in their own pencil cases and other materials for their own use as normal. We will ask that school bags are kept on the floor.
- **Parking** - If arriving to school or nursery by car, please park as far away as possible from the building to avoid congestion. If you can, please consider walking or taking another form of active travel.
- **Restrictions** – the Scottish Government guidance advises that parent/carers should not enter the building or classrooms and that social distancing of 2 metres takes place at playground entrances/exits. We appreciate this is change particularly at the beginning of a new term when children start school but this is designed to keep you and everyone in the community safe.

You may find the information bulletin produced for parents by parents and published by the National Parent Forum for Scotland helpful: www.npfs.org.uk

If you have any specific questions you wish to raise you can let us know by emailing us at: Educationcovid19@southlanarkshire.gov.uk