

Education Services

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**Clackmannanshire
Council**

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Comhairle Siorrachd
Chlach Mhanann

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Our Ref: LS / NW

Your Ref: -

Date: 31st July 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

As you may know, the Scottish Government made an announcement yesterday (30th July) confirming that all Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings can reopen in August. In Clackmannanshire, some of our extended year settings have already re-opened and all other ELC staff will return on the 10th of August to prepare for welcoming back all children from Wednesday the 12th of August. Your ELC setting will tell you the date your child can start back.

I know you may have a few questions and concerns about ELC reopening. In this letter I hope to answer some of your questions that apply across all Clackmannanshire settings. Where arrangements are specific to individual ELCs, parents and carers will get supplementary information directly from the setting on **Thursday 6th August** once their plans are agreed. Please contact your child's school ELC if you have any specific questions once they are open again on the 10th of August or at any time for the extended year ELCs. If you have any questions in the meantime, please e-mail education@clacks.gov.uk.

Public Health

I can assure you that the health, safety and wellbeing of all ELC staff and children is our number one priority and we have taken every precaution to ensure any risks are mitigated as much as possible. Every ELC setting has been risk assessed and guidance issued by the Scottish Government on health and safety matters will be followed by all settings. [You can see that guidance here - link.](#)

Our key areas of focus to ensure public health are -

- enhanced hygiene and cleaning practice
- limiting children's contacts
- maximizing the use of outdoor spaces
- physical distancing between adults in the setting including parents at drop-off and pick-up times
- active engagement with Test and Protect.

If you, your child or a member of your close family becomes ill, especially with Covid-19 symptoms, please do not send them to ELC. Contact [NHS Inform online](#) and follow their advice on booking a test. If a child arrives at ELC with any symptoms, they will be kept apart from other children in a ventilated space and sent home as soon as possible. You can find out more at Test and Protect - <https://www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/test-and-protect>
If any cases of Covid-19 are detected in an ELC setting, we will follow Public Health advice.

The ELC Day

Start times and end times of the day may be staggered - check with the setting. We would encourage children and parents to walk, cycle or wheel to school if they can. If you travel by car, please avoid parking near the gates. Parents/ carers should not meet in groups outside the doors, or block paths which may make physical distancing between adults difficult. Establishments may have a one way system with markings to follow and for social distancing please be vigilant and follow directions. Adults should not go inside the building unnecessarily. Settings will give you specific advice about drop off and pick up arrangements.

Support

Where children have specific additional support needs or are vulnerable due to family circumstances - staff will help you plan the best way to provide additional support. Some children may be upset or have experienced trauma from what has happened during the pandemic - your key worker can arrange additional support for them too.

Health measures in the setting

All children will be encouraged and supported during the day to wash or sanitise their hands regularly and practice good cough hygiene. Settings will be subjected to enhanced cleaning, especially areas that are frequently touched, with products which are effective against viruses. Ventilation will be increased by opening windows and doors. Evidence shows that young children are less likely to be affected or transmit the virus.

Physical Distancing

Children will be in groups of 25-30 and staff will be assigned to stay with groups and avoid mixing with other groups. Every effort will be made to minimise children mingling outwith their group. Children will not need to stay physically distant from each other or their key worker but staff members will stay 2 metres away from each other and children as much as possible. Large group events are suspended for now and movement around the setting will be minimised to reduce contact between large numbers of children.

PPE

Children will not be asked to wear face coverings but some staff may choose to do so. If a staff member has to e.g. to give first aid or personal care, they will use suitable PPE which may include sterile gloves, aprons n. If you have any concerns or if your child is clinically vulnerable or has additional support needs - please ask your setting for advice or about an individual risk assessment.

Clothing and items brought from home

It is important to make sure clothes are clean and washed regularly to minimise the risk of spreading infection. We are also discouraging children to bring any personal items from home - and if they do, not to share them. Ensure any items are clean before you bring them to ELC and can be cleaned when you take them home, especially comforters or soft toys. The setting will ensure any equipment and toys they use are easy to clean and cleaned frequently especially before they are used by another group.

Meals / snacks

Meals will be provided - initially in the form of a packed lunch. Meal and snack times may be staggered to avoid large numbers of children gathering at the same time and keep children within their group. We will encourage children not to share food or drink items.

Learning and play, including outdoor learning

Our educators are skilled in assessing where children are in their learning and have the professional experience to provide each child with the learning experiences they need to progress. Educators will speak to children and parents during the course of the session to ensure their learning is progressing appropriately.

ELC settings also plan to make greater use of the outdoors for learning as being outdoors is also good for mental health and wellbeing. Please ensure your child dresses appropriately for the weather for any outdoor learning.

I hope I have covered the main issues, including those of a practical nature, to enable a smooth return to ELC from the 12th of August. Your ELC setting will be able to answer any additional questions you may have.

We will continue to follow Government advice to keep everyone safe and we have already worked on 'phasing recovery plans' to recover from the impact of the pandemic and some additional contingency plans should we need to go into lockdown again.

Thank you for taking the time to read this - if you have any other question or concerns, please direct those to the relevant ELC setting or if it is a Clackmannanshire-wide issue, please email education@clacks.gov.uk so we can respond.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorraine Sanda".

Lorraine Sanda
Chief Education Officer