

8 April 2021

**Education and Learning Directorate**  
The Bridge  
Glasgow Road  
Dumfries  
DG2 9AW

Dear Parents/Carers

**RETURN TO SCHOOL FOR SECONDARY PUPILS FROM 12 APRIL 2021**

I hope you and your family had an enjoyable holiday.

The First Minister announced yesterday that, having assessed the data with the input of national clinical advisors, virtually all pupils will return to school full-time after the Easter holiday. For us in Dumfries and Galloway this is Monday, 12 April. This will be a relief for our secondary pupils who watched their younger neighbours and siblings go back to school some weeks ago. I thank all our secondary pupils for their patience, sticking with the rules and with their remote learning.

The one exception to the full-time, face-to-face return is children who are on the shielding list. The Government is continuing to recommend to families that shielded children stay at home until 26 April. I know this will be hard for this small number of children not yet able to join their friends and I ask for their patience for two more weeks, in line with advice from Scotland's Chief Medical Officer.

The return to school will involve, as it did last August, the removal of strict 2m physical distancing between pupils in secondary school, again, according to Government guidelines - but we are asking schools to consider how they strengthen other mitigations. I also ask parents to continue to keep themselves and others safe by not congregating when dropping children off and only entering schools by prior arrangement.

We continue to promote the measures in place to keep everyone safe including regular cleaning throughout the day, good ventilation, and regular asymptomatic testing for COVID for all staff and secondary aged pupils. Face coverings will play a key role in keeping everyone safe in our schools. All secondary pupils will be expected to wear a face covering, unless they are exempt. Information on exemptions and a form for parents to complete is on our website: <https://supportdg.dumgal.gov.uk/face-covering-exemptions>

We will continue to work with Public Health in order to quickly identify and limit any outbreaks that do arise and take their advice to keep everyone safe. I am confident our schools are well prepared and ready for all pupils returning to classrooms at the beginning of the new term on 12 April.

The announcement this week has given us a spring in our step, and we look forward to all pupils and staff returning to school on Monday.

Yours sincerely

**Gillian Brydson**  
Director Skills, Education and Learning