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Dear Parents/Carers,

Can I once again start by thanking all of you, and your amazing young people, for working with us over this incredibly difficult time, and I know how much you will now be looking forward to a festive break.

I wanted to write to you to update you on new guidance received by the Scottish Government on Friday and what this means for our young people going forward.

Firstly, at this stage, we are unaware what position we may be in for January, as the Omicron variant continues to take a strong hold nationwide. You will be aware that staff and pupil attendance have been hugely affected by illness and self-isolation and that maintaining statutory education has been incredibly difficult.

I have asked all Headteachers across the authority to ensure that plans for remote/blended learning are ready, should these be needed, and to ensure staff and young people are prepared for such eventuality, although we very much hope this will not be necessary.

In respect of the update to mitigations in the revised guidance, these include:

- A strengthened approach to minimising contacts, using bubbles/ groupings where practicable indoors. Schools will continue to not run assemblies or large group gatherings.
- Continued restrictions on school visitors.
- A strengthened approach to self-isolation for high risk / household contacts, whereby they are required to self-isolate for 10 days regardless of age, vaccination status or a negative PCR result, as communicated previously in our letter with Public Health.
- School trips and events will continue to be affected, and an embargo on overnight trips will remain in place.

We would wish to reinforce the huge part that testing plays as part of ongoing mitigations and we ask that secondary pupils have a supply of LFDs from school before the holidays, the school will advise where these can be picked up.

The entirety of the guidance can be found here if you wish to access this - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on reducing the risks in schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools)

Lastly, can I wish you and your families a wonderful festive break and clearly we all hope for a better 2022 as the pandemic continues to affect our lives, and those of others. Take care and a huge thank you to all of you for your ongoing understanding and co-operation.

Yours sincerely



LINDA MCAULAY-GRIFFITHS

Chief Education Officer and Head of Education