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Date: 5 March 2021



Education Department
Council Offices
211 Main Street
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G78 1SY

Dear Parent / Carer

You will be aware that the Scottish Government confirmed on Tuesday 2 March 2021 the next step in reopening education. This is welcome news as we look forward to bringing back all pupils in a phased return from the week beginning 15 March 2021.

Our younger children in ELC settings and Primary 1 to 3 have returned with great enthusiasm to their daily routine in playrooms and classrooms. Staff report how delighted the children are to see their friends and to be learning in school. I expect that our older pupils will be equally keen to settle back into school and reconnect with friends and staff.

I appreciate that this news may bring a mixture of emotions for some families. I want to reassure you that our school staff are ready to welcome your children and young people back. Each establishment has updated risk assessments for school buildings in accordance with the latest advice and guidance published by the Scottish Government. Covid safety measures remain in place, including for example, set seats on school transport, staggered breaks and lunch times, one way systems and mandatory face coverings.

Our schools will be in touch with you directly to provide this specific detail however I wanted to write to you to share the agreed timeline for your child's return.

Primary Schools

Pupils in P4-7 will return to school on Monday 15 March. Vulnerable children and the children of keyworkers will re-join their usual classes, as current arrangements will come to an end.

All P4– P7 children who are entitled to a free school meal will now access this in school from Monday 15 March 2021.

Should your child be entitled to free school meals and is unable to attend school because of self-isolation, please contact 0141 577 3575.

Parents who require Out of School Provision should contact the provider directly to make arrangements.

Secondary Schools

From 15 March, all secondary pupils will move to a blended model of remote and in-school learning. Details of this approach will be communicated by schools to ensure everyone knows when to be in school and when to learn from home.



Mark Ratter, Director of Education, East Renfrewshire Offices, 211 Main St, Barrhead G78 1SY

Priority for in school face to face lessons will be given to senior phase students (S4-S6) who are taking national qualifications.

Our S1-S3 pupils will also have an opportunity for face to face lessons. However, this will be limited given the priority to our senior pupils and physical distancing restrictions. They will receive a planned weekly time in school which will prioritise their health and wellbeing following lockdown.

Provision for key worker families and vulnerable learners will continue for all eligible pupils.

Each school will decide how best to safely deliver remote and in-school learning for their pupils. A schools' model will consider pupil needs, subject choices, accommodation availability and compliance with the 2 metre physical distancing required between learners and adults.

As we move now into a phase of blended learning, this will necessitate further change in the current remote learning offer. Our focus will continue to be on high quality provision taking account of the resources available. Schools will contact parents/carers to inform them of the changes which are necessary.

It is the Scottish Government's expectation that all secondary school pupils will be back in school on a full time basis after the Easter holidays.

Special Schools

A significant number of learners have continued to attend school during this period of closure. Discussions between school staff and parents will take place to ensure that it is safe for children in P4-7 to return. Likewise, subject to medical advice, discussions will continue to prioritise learners in S4-S6 whilst providing some face to face lessons for S1-S3 pupils.

Provision for key worker families and vulnerable learners will continue for all eligible pupils.

It is the Scottish Government's expectation that all pupils will be back in school on a full time basis after the Easter holidays.

Transport

Pupils who travel by school transport will continue to be able to do so.

For pupils in secondary school accessing school transport, we will be implementing a system to enable pupils to book a place on the bus in line with their timetable. This will help ensure we can maintain the appropriate social distancing whilst making sure that we are able to accommodate the blended learning arrangements. Please be assured that if your child requires school transport, we will ensure this is provided for.

All primary pupils will be able to continue to access school transport to get to and from school.

We will be getting in touch with individuals in the coming days to advise of the arrangements and the process in place for school transport.

School Meals

School meals will continue to be available under the current arrangement for secondary pupils, i.e. the catering service will provide a lunch service for children of key worker families and vulnerable learners attending school for the full day; and free school meal packs will be delivered to eligible families under the present arrangement. When all pupils are to return full

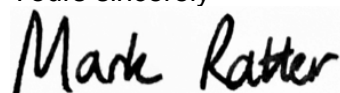


time in school (after the Easter holidays), the lunch service be provided in school for those paying and those eligible for free meals, similar to the provision in primary that will be available from 15 March. After Easter, should your child be entitled to free school meals and is unable to attend school because of self-isolation, please contact 0141 577 3575.

Your child's school will be in touch with further information on how they will do their very best to support your child's learning during this period of transition.

I want to take this opportunity again to thank all our families, children and young people for their continued support. We've now reached a milestone – a year living with this pandemic and the associated disruption to learning. We now have reason to hope that some normality will return to our schools. Young people and their families have sacrificed a great deal over the last year in order to help suppress the virus and save lives. Their enormous contribution should be recognised and appreciated.

Yours sincerely



Mark Ratter
Director of Education

