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Dear Parents and Carers

## **UPDATE FROM MAUREEN MCKENNA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION**

I want to thank you and your children for your continued support as we deal with the ongoing health pandemic. I would also like to pay tribute to all the staff in our schools and nurseries for their continued commitment and professionalism.

The last eight months have been challenging for us all but we now have one term of the school year under our belt – I know that this has not been without its hurdles – but our schools and nurseries, staff and families have remained resilient.

As I have said many times, our principle aim in all of this is to keep everyone safe and minimise the disruption to our children and young people's learning.

I know the winter months will bring their own set of challenges but we will continue to do our very best to manage the ever changing situation. Our schools and nurseries will continue to keep you informed and I know that our Parent Councils are also working hard to support our schools. The Glasgow City Parents Group has been working hard on a number of issues. They keep their Facebook page regularly updated <https://www.facebook.com/glasgowcityparentsgroup/>

You may be aware that the government has recently announced that there will be external examinations for Higher and Advanced Higher only with National 5 being internally assessed just as National 1 to 4 are just now.

SQA are going to provide us with detailed advice but young people will be able to achieve grades A-C as well as a pass of the internal units similar to National 1 to 4. We will send out the detailed information once we have this.

We welcome this decision as it recognises the potential impact of the pandemic and the disruption on learning and teaching during the initial lockdown.

On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October, the SQA issued a statement. The full statement can be found here <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/95281.html>

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When schools returned in August we had to make a number of decisions on the back of Scottish Government advice, guidance and scientific evidence to help suppress the virus.

These included restricting visitors to schools, school lets, parents' evenings, swimming and musical activities out with school at the City Halls.

Unfortunately the advice and guidance remains the same with regards these activities and we will consider them again in March 2021.

I know that this will be disappointing but I'm afraid we have no other option to try and reduce the risk and help suppress the spread of the virus.

I have asked schools and nurseries to come up with innovative and creative ways in which to communicate your child's progress as we know how important this is to our families. Parent Councils will help with this and schools will send out information directly to their parents and carers.

We will revisit all these topics again in March.

These are hard decisions to take but thank you again for your continued support during a very challenging situation.

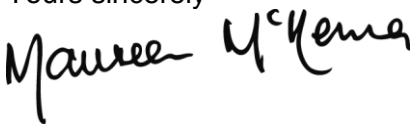
You will be aware of the temporary arrangements we have put place to reduce cash handling in schools. It is appreciated that the payment arrangements for school meals are far from ideal but our focus on ensuring our young people have access to meals and snacks is our priority.

A new parent pay system is under development but this will not be ready until 2021. In the interim, we are undertaking a pilot in three schools to establish a means of providing safe local cash handling facilities for meals. We will be in touch in due course. In the meantime your support and patience is appreciated.

I will be back in touch with any new information and please continue to visit <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/25947/Recovery-Resilience-and-Reconnection-2020> for the most current updates.

Please all keep safe and well.

Yours sincerely



**MAUREEN McKENNA**  
Executive Director of Education