



# EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Dear Parent/Carer

## Christmas Holiday Period

You may be aware that the Scottish Government was considering whether or not to extend the Christmas holiday period for schools in light of Covid-19. The Depute First Minister has decided that he will not make any changes to the planned holiday dates having taken Public Health Advice.

Local Authorities were given delegated responsibility where necessary to make local arrangements including implementing periods of remote learning where appropriate. I write to you with the Moray Council arrangements and the reasons for this decision, as follows:

- Schools close for **all** pupils and **all** staff on Friday 18 December as planned
- **All** staff and pupils will return to school on Tuesday 5 January as our agreed calendar dates and with no need for a period of remote learning taking into consideration:
  - **Our current position in protective level 1 with a low number of positive cases**
  - **The low level of disruption to education in Moray since August**
  - **The protective factors in place ensuring schools are positive and safe environments**
  - **The need for schools and ELC settings to be open and for education to continue**

We are also mindful of the demands on our senior phase young people and staff at this time given the demands on assessment evidence within the senior phase. We are aware that some local authorities will enter periods of remote learning depending on their 'normal' holiday periods and due to the position of in-service days.

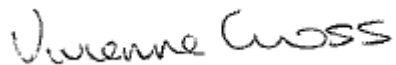
I sincerely thank you all for your overwhelming support of our schools and Early Learning and Childcare settings at this time. The first two terms of session 2020/21 have been challenging for a number of reasons as new routines and processes have been implemented. However I am delighted that Moray's children and young people have settled in well and that learning has continued at pace. The resilience and adaptability of pupils has been highlighted and how they have developed a deep understanding of why their learning is different at this time. I am constantly amazed at the creative, innovative learning experiences delivered daily.

On your behalf I pass on grateful thanks to all school leaders, nursery managers, teachers and school staff for their continued dedication and commitment to education and the health and wellbeing of Moray's children and young people. It is no mean feat to work in schools and settings where there are enhanced procedures to ensure the health and safety of all is maintained and to deliver learning and support in a totally different environment. We are continually thankful for the support being provided including to those pupils who cannot attend school through Covid-19 related issues.

Finally and most importantly my sincere thanks to you all for your patience and understanding as we continue to implement Scottish Government guidance in order to keep schools and settings open. We appreciate how difficult this can be and at times how frustrating it is, however please be assured that any decisions made are in the best interests of Moray's children and young people during the pandemic.

Wishing you all have a peaceful Christmas, spending time with those closest to you and in line with the advice and guidance depending on what protective level Moray is in on a weekly basis. Stay safe, well and take care.

Yours sincerely



**Vivienne Cross**  
**Head of Education (Chief Education Officer)**