



EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Education, Communities & Organisational Development

Moray Council

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Dear Parents and Carers

Another calendar year and school term draws to a close as we continue to navigate our way through the Covid-19 pandemic. We sincerely hope that you and your family are not adversely affected by this as we continue to see the impact on our schools and nurseries. Your patience and support, through an extended period of a very different engagement with your child's school or nursery is greatly appreciated. We fully understand how difficult it is, however ensuring the health and safety of all is a key priority for us all and so additional measures continue to be in place.

As a result of an increase in positive cases, particularly the new variant, Omicron, we have received a new version of Scottish Government Guidance – Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on reducing the risks from COVID-19 in schools, version 7.0 which was published on 17 December 2021. When we return on 10 January we will see a retention of current measures with the return of others as follows:

- Staff and secondary pupils will continue to undertake Lateral Flow Device (LFD) testing on a Sunday and on a Tuesday. A reminder for all to undertake a test on Sunday 9 January, prior to return.
- In a change to current practice, and due to the Omicron variant, anyone who has tested positive by PCR within 90 days **should now** still be encouraged to continue LFD testing
- Self-isolation measures changed on 11 December – if you have any queries or concerns please check on [NHS link](#)
- Schools will now minimise contact of groups of pupils indoors, but not outdoors
- Please continue to inform your child's school of any absence and if this is Covid related, we particularly want you to tell us as we may have to send out information letters
- For those pupils in the Senior Phase who are studying for SQA examinations, we have planned learning experiences akin to prelims for January – full details from your child's school – these will operate with increased mitigations
- Your child may see increased signage and the return of one way systems and other operational changes. School staff will brief children on return.
- The school meal provision in primary will alter slightly as we return to using classrooms for dining purposes. We may alter the times where this is necessary. Again, your child's school will keep you updated with regards to choices and in house arrangements.
- We will continue to limit visitors and footfall to those professionals who are required to support children and young people
- Parent Councils will not be able to meet on school premises and we will not be able to support parents' evenings – schools will keep you informed of virtual methods for this
- We currently have in place enhanced day cleaning of our buildings and the Council has agreed to extend this to the end of the session in June 2022
- To support ventilation and allow clean air to circulate, we will continue to open windows when necessary. Children and young people can wear additional clothing if they wish

Leading up to the end of term, we have seen a rise in absences, including staff. Schools and nurseries have worked hard to minimise disruption to you and your family. However at times it has been essential to have partial or full closures and a move to remote learning. We will continue to monitor this as we return in January and we will communicate this with you as soon as we can. Schools will consider year groups and classes in their planning and where possible we will accommodate identified children and any key worker children for in-school provision where this can be staffed. During any temporary closures we will continue to provide free school meals via payments to families.

If you drop your child off at school, we respectfully ask you to park, where possible, further away from school and if you accompany your child on to school grounds that you wear a face covering and maintain physical distancing. Car-sharing is still discouraged at this time.

It is fully understood that continuation of a risk-based approach is hard on everyone however we must follow medical and scientific advice and implement guidance as necessary. None of us considered that we would still be taking precautions however we can all see and hear on social media and on news channels as well as newspapers that this virus continues to impact on our daily work and interactions. Until society is safe, we will continue to follow advice and adhere to additional measures. This has an impact on us all, as parents, children and young people and those staff working under different conditions on a daily basis. Your support with this is greatly appreciated by headteachers, managers, school staff and us all.

We look forward to working with you and your children in the new term ahead and schools will confirm any individual changes with you directly once they return. Thank you for your continued support as we continue to learn to live with Covid-19 in our communities. Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and very best wishes for 2022.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vivienne Cross".

Vivienne Cross
Head of Education (Chief Education Officer)