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Education and Families

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Dear Parent / Carer

Clarification of Arrangements for August

You may recall that I wrote to you earlier in the month with information about our emerging plans for August. At that point, we were still awaiting government guidance regarding the planned return of pupils as part of phase three of the Scottish Government's Strategic Route Map to Recovery. Since then we have been undertaking detailed consultation with stakeholders about our plans to support all children and young people.

Firstly, we are making plans based on the information we currently have available to us, and that the assumptions we are making for how schools will operate in August are still subject to change. Due to the two-metre physical distancing guidance, our schools will be able to admit between 40% and 50% of pupils at any given time, although this may vary positively in some locations due to the size of school building itself and any suitable surrounding facilities which could be utilised. We are planning to offer a minimum of two days of in-school education for all pupils, with access to enhanced in-school learning provided as and when we are able to expand our models locally.

This will be directly supported by a much enhanced digital learning model, which will be an additional support for pupils' in-school learning, and which will be coordinated through our new digital school. Planning for this is taking account of feedback from parents we have consulted.

Following consultation with trade unions and with our Parent Council Chairs we are proposing to run a four and a half day school week for **primary children**, with the half day being on a Wednesday, with a key focus around support for our most vulnerable children. The model for **secondary schools** involves flexible arrangements which will be arranged by schools themselves. Schools will write to parents as soon as possible to clarify specific arrangements for children, including which days of the week each year group will attend. In ASN schools, timetabling arrangements will mirror those of primary schools with Wednesdays being a key focus for our most vulnerable children.

We are restating our commitment to family-focused planning by asking schools to ensure that siblings are supported to come to school on the same day.

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We also intend to have one in-service day on Tuesday 11 August, with pupils starting back at school on Wednesday 12 August, as per government guidance. The week will be organised and communicated at a school level, but the expectation of North Lanarkshire Council is that all pupils will be in school for at least part of that first week.

The second in-service day is still required under national arrangements and we intend that it is scheduled for Thursday 24 September.

Naturally, should there be any substantial change to national policy which allows us to bring pupils back for a greater proportion of the school week, or indeed, further expand educational resources out with traditional school facilities, we will be in touch again to outline how we intend to accomplish this.

Once again, we wish to thank you all for your and support in helping us to plan these interim arrangements.

Yours sincerely

Derek Brown
Executive Director, Education & Families

Councillor Frank McNally
Convener of Education & Families