

Return to School

When do pupils return to school?

Schools in North Lanarkshire will return on a phased basis from Wednesday 12 August, following an in-service day on Tuesday 11 August. These arrangements are similar to those being planned by many other local authorities. The arrangements are as follows:

Primary schools

- Wednesday 12 August: Primary One, Primary Two, Primary Three.
- Thursday 13 August: Primary One, Primary Four, Primary Five, Primary Six, Primary Seven.
- From Friday 14 August: All pupils.

Please note that schools may vary arrival and departure times, particularly for Primary One. If this is the case, schools will be in direct contact with parents to confirm these changes as soon as possible.

Secondary schools

- Wednesday 12 August: First Year, Second Year, Third Year.
- Thursday 13 August: First Year, Fourth Year, Fifth Year, Sixth Year.
- From Friday 14 August: All pupils.

ASN schools

ASN schools will follow the phasing set out above. However, taking into account the specific needs of some children, there may be some variation. Again, schools will be in contact with parents to confirm any changes as soon as possible.

Nursery classes and Family Learning Centres

Those attending nursery classes at a primary school will return on Wednesday 12 August and those based at Family Learning Centres will return on Thursday 13 August. The exception to this is Stepping Stones FLC, which is open on the 12th.

What about drop-off and pick-up?

Schools may communicate directly with parents about this as local circumstances will direct best practice. There will be external signage to direct pupils. Schools may ask particular year groups to enter buildings by different gates. If possible, pupils and parents should walk or cycle to school as individual schools may ask parents to park further away from the school.

Attending school, buildings and safety measures

The council is fully implementing Scottish Government guidance for the return to schools. It is important to emphasise that no single measure can make schools as safe as possible. The guidance is clear that it is a combination of measures which come together to work in different circumstances.

What will schools look like when children/young people return?

Schools will look very different to assist with the flow of pupils around the building and allow space for physical distancing between staff.

Extensive signage will be in place to indicate direction of travel and a 'keep left' policy is in place in corridors and stairs.

There will be different entrance and exit points that will be clearly marked and zoning will be in place if required for different classes or year groups.

Sanitisation stations will be in place for enhanced hand hygiene procedures. There will be less furniture in common areas.

What else has been done to make schools as safe as possible?

Every school has been through an individual risk assessment.

An enhanced daily cleaning regime is in place, with a focus on touchpoints, surfaces, equipment and ventilation. This will mean that cleaning staff will focus on touchpoints during the day as well as at the end of the day.

Sanitisation stations are available and all pupils will be encouraged to wash their hands frequently with soap and warm water for 20 seconds during breaks, after meals, after using the toilet and at other points during the day.

It is important that pupils practice good hand and respiratory hygiene. This means frequent handwashing and covering your mouth and nose with a tissue if coughing or sneezing.

Can pupils bring school bags?

Yes, pencil cases and lunch boxes too but items should be limited where possible. However, no other items (such as toys for primary pupils) can be brought to school and pupils should not share any items with others.

Can I visit the school?

In general, no. There may be some exceptional circumstances where head teachers ask a parent to enter a school but this will be very unusual. Unfortunately, this includes Primary One pupils. Schools will do everything they can to make sure your child is comfortable in their new surroundings.

If you do need to visit the school, please wear a face covering and you will be asked to provide contact and time details on entry and exit to support Test and Protect arrangements.

Should pupils wear school uniform?

Yes. Pupils should wear their school uniform. Uniforms should be washed as normal. There is no advice which suggests that enhanced washing is required.

Physical distancing and pupil movement

Will my child need to physically distance at school?

Early years and primary school children do not need to physically distance from each other but should remain physically distanced from staff where possible. It's understandable that children may be anxious and need contact with staff but it will be managed appropriately.

Government guidance does set out that for young children and children with additional support needs, physical distancing from staff may not be practical. Staff will maintain a two-metre distance from each other.

In secondary schools, distancing will be encouraged between pupils, between pupils and staff, and between staff. Where possible it is recommended that pupils seat facing forward, side by side, and not facing each other.

Will there be restrictions on movement for pupils or other changes?

Children and young people may be limited to certain 'zoned' areas with movement throughout school buildings kept to a minimum. Where feasible, pupils will be kept in groups for the duration of the school day.

This may be more difficult in secondary schools depending on subject choices. Where possible, staff will move between classes as opposed to pupil groups.

Scottish Government guidance recommends that schools maximise the use of outdoor space for learning and teaching. Appropriate cleaning of outdoor resources will take place between sessions.

Will assemblies and other group activities take place?

No, these will be avoided. Smaller groups may come together at various times but this will be limited.

Choirs, orchestras, drama and indoor PE will not be reintroduced until Scottish Government guidance allows.

What about subjects that require attendance at another school?

Schools will be doing everything possible to minimise pupil travel to other schools. This may mean digital learning being put in place.

Face coverings and personal protective equipment (PPE)

Do pupils have to wear face coverings?

Scottish Government guidance sets out that pupils do not routinely require to wear face coverings. However, should pupils wish to do so, they will not be discouraged from doing so.

What about staff?

Staff will not require to wear face coverings provided distance can be maintained from pupils, however they may choose to do so. Where that is not possible, and staff are closer than two metres for 15 minutes or more, staff will wear face coverings. Risk assessments have been carried out where very close contact is required (for example, for intimate care in ASN settings) and staff will wear appropriate personal protective equipment where required by the risk assessment.

Breaks, lunchtimes and breakfast clubs

Will breaks and lunchtimes be different?

There will be designated entrance and exit points in the dining hall and individual schools may make decisions about staggering times.

Will payments change for lunches?

It's important that as much cash handling as possible is removed from the system. Cashless payment is available through the [iPay Impact system which can be signed up for via this link](#). Parents are encouraged to set up an account.

Primary pupil meals will be pre-ordered daily. We have also introduced the Fusion app and secondary pupils will use this to pre-order food.

For those unable to pay electronically, cash tills will be available between 8am and 9.30am each morning so that those pupils can pre-order.

For primary schools, pupils will use sanitised coloured bands which will signify their order and pupils will be directed to the correct collection point.

Will menus be different?

Menu choices will be reduced. However, there will always be a mixture of packed lunches and hot food option available.

What about breakfast clubs?

Breakfast clubs will operate at their normal times.

Can secondary pupils leave school at lunchtime?

We are encouraging all pupils to remain in school at lunchtime. However, should a secondary pupil leave at lunchtime they must comply with Scottish Government guidance, for example in wearing a face covering in shops.

Transport

Will school transport be available?

Yes. School transport will be available as normal to eligible pupils. Your school will be in touch as normal with arrangements for buses and taxis. Transport operators are aware of phased arrangements in the first week of school. Children and young people should wash hands before going on transport and wash when entering the school.

For pupils from ASN schools, many parents will be taking their own children to school, utilising the council's travel to school policy.

Will physical distancing be required for children on school transport?

Scottish Government guidance states that school transport should be treated as an extension of school, ie, that no physical distancing is required. Parents may wish to encourage pupils to walk or cycle to school in keeping with the promotion of active travel.

Will privilege transport be available for children in August/September 2020?

Privilege transport will be available, subject to the usual processes and procedures.

Concerns and anxieties

My child has a specific health condition and I don't think they should return to school. What do I need to know?

It is expected that all children and young people will be able to return to school unless otherwise advised by a medical professional. If this applies to your child, you should discuss this with the school in the first instance.

I'm really worried about my child's safety and I'm worried about the return to school. What should I do?

We understand that some parents will have anxieties and the health and wellbeing of children and young people are priorities. You should talk to your school in the first instance so that your school can work with you but resources have been prepared to support schools, including the educational psychology team.

My child is really worried. Will there be support available?

Yes. We are working with other partners to ensure resources are in place to support pupils who are particularly anxious. We have also developed a number of support resources that are available [online](#).

Coronavirus in schools

What happens if coronavirus cases are identified in school?

The return to school comes with associated risk of transmission of coronavirus. All the arrangements we have put in place are aimed at reducing that risk. However, all schools will have continuity plans in place to ensure education can continue should, for example, a staff member become unwell.

It's very important that nobody – staff or pupil – attends a school if they have any of the symptoms of coronavirus (a new cough, a fever, or a change in or loss of taste or smell).

If you have any symptoms you must immediately self-isolate and book a test via the NHS Inform website. You must also inform the school immediately if you have symptoms and of the result of any test. This is really important.

What happens if there is an outbreak at a school?

We will work very closely with the public health department of NHS Lanarkshire, who will be responsible for advising schools and the council about what should happen. Should a school need to temporarily close we have developed plans for digital learning. We will communicate with parents as quickly and as clearly as possible should this happen.

Learning, Curriculum and Online Learning

Will there be national exams next year?

The Scottish Qualifications Authority in consultation with the Scottish Government will decide on this. School staff will keep parents up to date when any decisions have been made.

Will online learning be developed?

We had already been planning for a digital school to support in-class learning with online resources and this is in development. This will include having access to TEAMS and GLOW.