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Education and Families

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Dear Parents/carers

Early Years and Schools Restrictions

I wanted to take this opportunity to write to you to thank you for your continued support throughout the year and specifically, this term and to also address some concerns raised by parents and carers around end of term transition/graduation events.

I fully understand how important these events are to our children and young people and their parents/carers. It is a time of great change, excitement, apprehension and joy for them and our family learning centres, nurseries and schools would normally all be planning a range of lively events.

However, the council must follow current Scottish Government advice and guidelines in relation to Covid-19 and schools and early years (ELC) premises. Although the council area remains in Level 2, the Scottish Government instructs that, for all educational premises, measures must be in place to keep children and young people as safe as possible ([Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on reducing the risks in schools, Scottish Government](#)).

The guidance clearly states that schools being open is a priority for the government but also outlines that it is imperative that schools and local authorities continue to take a precautionary approach.

The council early years and school teams want children and young people to experience transition events that are both meaningful and fun for them but it is important that we follow the restrictions that are in place in order to try and mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

Specifically, the guidance within the section 'physical distancing and minimising contact for adults' explicitly states that "adult visitors to schools should be strictly limited only to those that are necessary to support children and young people or the running of the school" and that this "should be communicated clearly to staff and the wider school community."

You may also be aware that a number of children, young people and staff in some of our early years facilities and schools have tested positive, while others are self-isolating. This demonstrates that Covid-19 is still very much with us and it is therefore vital that the council continues to support all measures to reduce the risk of transmission of Covid-19 to children, pupils and staff.

I understand that parents/carers want to attend and support their children at these special events, but the Scottish Government's position is clear: "every step should be taken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff in schools" and that "the mitigations set out in this guidance should be strictly adhered to."

A range of leaver and transition activities, graduation ceremonies and prom events are still being planned, with many taking place outdoors. However, it is clear from the guidance that parents/carers should not attend these events, unless a child requires support for specific reasons. If this is the case, please contact your child's head teacher to make arrangements.

All our teachers, early years' staff and other educational staff enjoy seeing our children and young people at these events and cherish these moments too, so please know that everyone is feeling despondent but we must keep our children and young people safe. This is a collective approach across both councils in Lanarkshire.

Management teams at family learning centres, nurseries and schools still want to make these events as special as possible and will explore ways to record these moments to share with you, using a range of good Covid-safe approaches, including recording video and taking photographs.

I do understand that this is disappointing but I must stress the importance that the council is compelled to follow the Scottish Government's advice and all our efforts are focused on keeping our children and young people safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derek Brown', written in a cursive style.

Derek Brown
Executive Director, Education and Families