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Education and Families
Mr. Mitchell
Strategic Lead (Interim)
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Dear Parent/Carer,

As always, I hope this letter finds you, your family and your loved ones safe and well. I hope that you and your family are managing to navigate through lockdown, working from home, remote/digital learning and all other challenges as well as can possibly be expected. As many of you are aware, I am also a parent of two children currently engaging in digital learning at home and I am fully aware, through first-hand experience, of many of the challenges we are faced with on a daily basis at the moment, I even decided to hide XBOX control pads in the boot of my car before driving to work one day this week to minimise potential distractions! Thank you for continuing to do such a great job with it all and thank you for your ongoing support.

As you know, the First Minister made her most recent announcement on Tuesday 2nd February providing a brief outline of the Scottish Government's plan for some children and young people to begin returning to school on a phased approach from Monday 22nd February. This date is subject to continued progress in suppressing the virus and will be confirmed on Tuesday 16th February in a further announcement. It is anticipated that initially, all P1, P2 and P3 pupils will return to school. We will receive confirmation of arrangements and expectations in due course so that we can begin our preparations and communicate with you as appropriate. There was no mention of a change in provision for P4-7 pupils at this time and presumably, current arrangements (digital/remote learning) will continue for them.

As I have written previously, such statements/announcements are the first that we hear about plans for school returns and you will understand that we have no further information at this stage. We are expecting to begin receiving updated guidance from the Scottish Government later next week and we eagerly anticipate confirmed expectations/arrangements in due course. Guidance will come from the usual sources including Scottish Government, North Lanarkshire Council and Education Scotland. We will continue to communicate with you at the earliest opportunities about all next steps.

Additionally, it has been stated that all those who work in schools will be offered 'at-home testing' twice per week. This is to serve as an additional mitigation to help keep us all safe. We recently offered to be a Scottish Government 'pilot' school for regular 'at home' staff testing and this has been ongoing successfully for a number of weeks now and therefore, we have a good understanding of the process and indeed the benefits of it.

Half – Term Holidays & INSET 4

Our mid-term holiday is almost upon us and even though almost all have been working from home, I'm sure the short break next week will be welcomed by young people, staff and families. Monday 8th and Tuesday 9th February are holidays and Wednesday 10th is a staff INSET day and therefore also a holiday for all young people. I would like to take this opportunity to again thank all young people and families for their tremendous efforts with digital/remote learning and I encourage you all to take a well-earned break over these days.



Half-Term Hub Support

To assist colleagues directly dealing with the health response to the pandemic, NLC is providing childcare support over the half-term holiday from Monday 8th to Wednesday 10th February at six school-based hubs across the local authority. This service is only for key workers who are assisting with the ongoing health response or who are directly involved with the vaccination programme.

Chryston Primary School will not be open due to the holiday but a local hub at Cumbernauld Academy, South Kildrum Ring Road, G67 2UF is available for urgent childcare but this must be communicated with NLC if required, in advance by accessing the following website link:

northlanarkshire.gov.uk/holidayhubs

Digital Learning

I would like to thank all of our staff, young people and families for their tremendous efforts so far with digital learning. Our preference of course is to work in school with pupils as normal and we look forward to returning to that as soon as it is safe to do so. We are all learning and finding ways to overcome many challenges and I think as a community we should be justifiably proud. This being said, we are always looking at ways to improve our practice and strategies and staff are continuously engaging in continued professional development and reflecting on pupil and parent views following recent discussions and surveys. It is impossible to find a 'one size fits all' approach and although we are encouraging routines as set out in our digital learning guide we realise that a degree of flexibility is essential to support young people, families and to encourage good physical and mental well-being.

Like me, I am sure that you will continue to closely follow all Scottish Government updates and announcements and we will continue to communicate with you as appropriate throughout. I'd like to thank you for your ongoing support, patience and understanding – it is a continuing challenge for us all to plan in this climate of rapidly changing contexts. I'd also like to take this opportunity again to thank the staff in our school for their continued work and support. I am mindful and extremely appreciative of the ongoing challenges and constant changes directly affecting their lives and professional practice too as they grapple with the circumstances to plan, prepare and explore best ways to support young people in school, at home and soon enough the phased return of some of our pupils – three highly complex scenarios to consider and plan for. Thank you for continuing to work in partnership with them to support the learning, well-being and progress of your children. Thank you as always for your continued efforts, support, patience and understanding – it is an inspiration for our staff team.

Stay safe and take care. I look forward to communicating further with you as appropriate in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. Mitchell