

Monday 20th April, 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you at this unprecedented time in Scottish education regarding a number of important issues affecting our young people. At present, there is heightened concern about the impact of the emergency situation on our children and young people, as well as their families and this letter is to offer some clarification and reassurance regarding arrangements over the next few weeks.

As you are aware all schools in Scotland have been closed since March 24th as part of the national lockdown arrangements in response to the COVID-19 health emergency. Over this period local authorities and schools have been ensuring continuity of education provision through home learning. Ensuring vulnerable children and young people are fully supported is also a priority for us.

North Lanarkshire Council currently operates a number of Community Hubs and Family Learning Centres to provide a childcare service for the families of key workers and support for vulnerable young people. The contribution by staff in these hubs during the period has been exceptional.

You will also be aware that the government announced an extension of the lockdown for at least an additional three weeks and, in light of that, our Education and Families team is planning for this and for any further extensions that may potentially be required. We are also considering carefully what the recovery phase will look like once the lockdown arrangements end and schools start to reopen. Parents will understand that it is not possible at this stage to set a date for this.

The information contained in this letter provides a broad overview of key areas of activity being undertaken by our team. There are a number of specific issues I have outlined that you may wish to discuss with your child's teacher or head teacher. You may find it more helpful to talk through practical issues with the people who know your child, and are therefore best to respond and help you. I know that schools have been making great efforts to stay in contact with parents and pupils, so it is sensible to recommend that this continues.

Therefore, if you have any issues relating to the contents of this letter, please email your school direct at its published email address. These email addresses are being regularly monitored by school staff who are working remotely.

I have been overwhelmed during my visits to our school Community Hubs (and in reviewing some of the online material produced by schools) at the commitment of our staff who greatly miss seeing their pupils every day. I am sure the children also miss the routine and day to day interaction that takes place in their schools, with their friends and with staff who help and support them. I know that this spirit will help us when we emerge from lockdown.

My main hope is that in such difficult times, families look after each other, make sure they stay safe and that we all do what we can to support our NHS colleagues in tackling the COVID-19 outbreak.

Please accept my very best wishes at this challenging time.

Yours,

Derek Brown Executive Director Education and Families