

Dear parent/carer,

Clarification for January arrangements

You will be aware that the First Minister announced at the weekend that the school Christmas holiday will now be extended to Monday 11 January 2021 for all pupils. While we await further clarification from the Scottish Government, I wanted to get in touch with you before schools, family learning centres and nurseries finish for the festive break to outline our plans for the return in the new year.

The change in guidance from the Scottish Government will make care and support for our children and young people challenging, but keeping them as safe as possible is paramount while we work through this health emergency as well as ensuring continuity of education provision through online learning at home.

In line with Scottish Government guidance, all schools, including primary, secondary, LCSC and additional support needs, as well as family learning centres and nurseries (local authority and partner providers), will be open from Wednesday 6 until Friday 8 January only for children of key workers and vulnerable families when childcare support will be provided.

Government guidance also stipulates that childminders can stay open to all children and should operate in accordance with Level 4 guidance.

All children and young people return to learning on Monday 11 January 2021 when online learning will be in place at least until 18 January 2021.

Online learning

Teachers will be in direct contact with pupils who will be able to access online learning through GLOW and Teams. In addition, this will be supplemented by the council's Digital School offering, which is currently available to primary and secondary schools. All content on the digital school will be regularly updated to ensure pupils have access to quality materials based on the curriculum. Further information will come directly from your school in relation to the digital offering before pupils return on the 11 January 2021.

Key worker and vulnerable family support

If you are a key worker and are unable to work from home, all schools, family learning centres and nurseries will be open for children and young people during existing times, when they will receive in-class learning. Lunch will be provided.

This service is **only** available to children of key workers (in the list attached) and vulnerable families. If another parent/carer is able to work from home, then your child must stay at home. Key worker support should only be accessed where you have no other alternative. Parents/carers who are key workers only should complete the attached key worker support form and send to the dedicated mailbox: keyworkerschools@northlan.gov.uk. Further details will be provided nearer the time.

Direct contact by their lead professional (social worker, health worker or school link) will be made with families of vulnerable children. If you are unable to contact your lead professional (social worker, health visitor, school link) to discuss attendance at school, please contact the Duty Officer – Education and Families on 01236 856326 (Monday to Friday, 8.45am-4.45pm) or social work emergency service on 0800 121 4114 (public holidays, weekends and out of office hours).

If you are using this service because you are a key worker or a vulnerable family, school transport will continue as normal week commencing Monday 11 January. You will be advised by your head teacher of any changes.

Additional Support Needs

I would like to thank ASN parent councils for working with us throughout this challenging time. Schools are planning for a bespoke learning package for individual children and young people. Head teachers/heads of centre or your lead professional will be in contact with parents/carers of children and young people with additional support needs to communicate arrangements and plans.

Free school meals

For all those who are eligible for free school meals, whether because of universal provision for P1-P3 or because you are otherwise entitled, Paypoint vouchers will be administered by SMS for the period 6 – 15 January when children and young people are learning from home.

This is an unparalleled situation and one that is changing rapidly but the council is focused on providing all our children and young people with quality education until schools and ELC establishments can return to a more normal routine.

I appreciate that you will still have questions around schools, centres and nurseries and about ongoing practical considerations and I aim to provide a further update when children and young people return to learning on 11 January 2021. More information will be available at northlanarkshire.gov.uk/schoolplans.

I would like to wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derek Brown', with a large loop at the start and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Derek Brown
Executive Director
Education and Families