

Our Ref: DB/KM
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Education and Families

Derek Brown
Executive Director
Civic Centre
Windmillhill Street
Motherwell, ML1 1AB
www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk

Dear Parents/carers

As you will be aware following the First Minister's announcement on 17 November, North Lanarkshire has been placed into Protection Level 4 from Friday 20 November for three weeks.

Schools and nurseries will remain open and we will continue to follow Scottish Government guidelines to keep our staff and pupils safe.

Children and young people who are on the shielding list should not attend school or nurseries.

However, you should consult your child's secondary care (hospital) clinical team who may advise that an individualised risk assessment could be undertaken with the school or nursery and arrangements put in place which may allow your child to continue to attend.

If your child does have to remain at home, the school will ensure that class work is provided and will keep in touch with you during this period. If your child is entitled to free school meals, arrangements will be made for a voucher to be sent via SMS, similar to what was carried out during lockdown.

These arrangements also apply in situations where your child may be required to self-isolate for a short period due to either being confirmed as having the COVID-19 virus, or being identified by as a close contact of someone who has. Such decisions are based on rigorous assessment of circumstances and involve close work between schools, North Lanarkshire Council and NHS Lanarkshire. Importantly, such decisions are made by our colleagues in Public Health and are part of our strategy to reduce the transmission of the virus.

The Supporting People Team may contact you to offer help in accessing support, however please feel free to contact the Team direct on 0300 555 0407 **which is available Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm** for advice on

- Emergency food provision
- Financial Support (Financial Inclusion Team)
- Urgent prescription collection
- Shopping requirements

Unfortunately PE can currently only take place outdoors so pupils should come dressed appropriately on these days.

As winter approaches we need to create a balance between the need for ventilation in our schools with keeping people warm. Where possible, and in line with government guidance, doors and windows to classrooms/playrooms should be kept open to increase natural ventilation. We will increase the heating in schools to ensure that our buildings are appropriately warm and we would encourage pupils to wear additional layers over the winter months.

I have attached the updated advice from the government guidance for level 4 for schools.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your continued support over these challenging months. In particular, I am grateful for the help and advice of the Parent Sounding Boards who have met with us regularly over the past few months, and whose members have been able to share with me the impact of COVID-19 on them and their communities, which in turn supports our planning in this unique and challenging period. I will continue to meet them as the situation progresses. Of course, should there be any further updates to arrangements, I will be in touch as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Brown
Executive Director, Education and Families

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/>

Protection Level 4 - enhanced and targeted protective measures

- the current advice is that children on the shielding list should not attend in person. However, there will be further consideration of how individualised risk assessments can be used to maximise school attendance, and remove barriers to access to regulated childcare services, for children who continue to shield during Level 4 restrictions. It is expected that these should be informed by the secondary care (hospital) clinical team caring for the child or young person.
- the majority of workplaces can be made safe for staff. To ensure this remains the case, employers should ensure that individualised risk assessments for school staff members with the highest clinical risk are in place and updated appropriately, and staff should speak to their employer to ensure all appropriate protections are in place.
- schools should be prepared to engage with enhanced testing responses to COVID-19 outbreaks in schools, where recommended by the Incident Management Team
- physical education within school settings should only take place out of doors. Schools should consider what types of activity and clothing may be most appropriate in view of weather conditions. While physical education should continue to be considered a priority, if weather is extremely bad then schools may use their judgement as to whether it is safe for children to be outside.
- pausing of the provision of non-essential activities or clubs outside the usual school timetable. This does not include regulated childcare operating from school premises.