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Dear Parent/Carer

The past few months have been unprecedented and very challenging and I am immensely grateful to all parents and carers across Renfrewshire for your patience and understanding during this time.

As you will be aware, the Scottish Government has now published a route map toward reopening schools and nurseries for our children and young people from August, which we in Renfrewshire are working towards.

### **Safety and wellbeing of our children and staff**

I understand many parents will have questions over safety. I can assure you the safety of our pupils and staff is our number one priority – and we will not ask anyone to come into school or nursery unless we are confident we have done all we can to minimise any risk.

The safety and wellbeing of our pupils and staff will be a continued focus and we will continue to follow all national guidance to ensure that it remains at the heart of our planning.

In terms of making buildings safe, we are following the national guidance. We are undertaking detailed risk assessments and have issued practical guidance on how to minimise the risk of infection. This is based on our experience from operating childcare hubs since March, by following guidance from government and by working in partnership with colleagues across council services.

We are putting an enhanced cleaning regime in place and staff will ensure hand-washing practice is followed. Physical distancing will also be applied which means we will be reducing the numbers in class at any time and using all available suitable spaces.

From this week our Heads and senior teams have returned to schools and nurseries to continue preparations and will be joined in school by staff throughout the remainder of June. This will allow staff to support planning for August and where appropriate to work with some small groups of children who will have the opportunity to be in school or nursery in June.

### **Children moving to primary one or secondary school**

We appreciate going to school for the first time or starting secondary school is a huge milestone in a child's life – and an important moment for you as parents and carers too – so it is important to us to do all we can to help it go as smoothly as possible. That includes giving children where we are able, the chance to say a proper goodbye to the places and teachers / early years practitioners where they have spent a hugely important part of their lives so far and to prepare for their start at the school they will be going to from August.

If this applies to your child, schools are planning for this to happen in the period between Thursday 18th and Tuesday 23 June. In addition, they will also be supporting transition remotely throughout June. Your child's school will be in touch with you directly in the near future with further details of which days this will be available, if you wish your child to return at this time.

For children with Additional Support Needs who may require enhanced support, schools will contact parents directly to discuss arrangements for your child. We recognise the anxieties this may be causing and want to ensure your child is ready for the next stage of their educational journey.

Arrangements are being managed by the schools themselves and will vary between each school cluster – so they won't be exactly the same arrangements right across Renfrewshire but we will ensure that the offer is the same for all children and pupils due to attend the same school.

I can also offer you a general update on some of the other work we have been doing to plan for all schools and nurseries opening after the summer.

## **Returning to School in August**

When our schools and nurseries return in August, it will be with a blended learning model, meaning children will be in class on some days and learning at home on others. Numbers will be significantly smaller to ensure physical distancing is adhered to in each class but that will also let teachers, early years practitioners and support staff spend more time with each child. We are currently working with all schools to develop a model which will see children taught in school and also supported at home through remote learning. I will update you with further information on how this will work before the end of June to allow you as much time as possible to prepare. Schools will also make every effort to ensure siblings are in school, especially nursery and primary school, at the same time.

We understand the challenges many parents face juggling home and work and that for many, not having children in school every day may provide challenges. I understand that this will mean some continued disruption for those of you who are working and I apologise for this, but unfortunately in order for us to follow physical distancing advice from the government we are not able to have all children in school at the same time.

We are working to be able to offer childcare for children of key workers, in line with government advice, on the days children are not in school. Parents will have to apply for this as it will not be possible for this to take place in our school buildings so we are working with Renfrewshire Leisure and out of school care providers to consider how and where this can be best delivered and as plans develop we will keep you informed. We will also be appealing to employers to work with their employees to

consider flexible working patterns to enable parents to care for their children on the days they are not in school.

### **Further Information**

I hope that this correspondence offers you some reassurance and detail on the work that is taking place to welcome our children and staff back into a safe environment. There is also a detailed schools and nurseries Q&A on our website which is regularly updated – please check that for more information at [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools).

Once again, my thanks go to you all for all your support in recent weeks. I hope you and your family can enjoy the summer and look forward to a new start or a return to school in August. All our schools and nurseries very much look forward to welcoming your children back.

Yours sincerely,



Steven Quinn  
Director of Children's Services