



WELCOME BACK!

What to expect for term one
of academic year 2020/2021



WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear parent or carer,

On behalf of all at Renfrewshire Council, I am delighted to be able to welcome your child back to school or nursery for the new term. I know how much our staff have been looking forward to seeing them all again.

We know the past few months haven't been easy for parents or children and young people and thank you again for your patience, flexibility and understanding while children and young people were learning from home.

This year's start of term won't look or feel the same as usual and we have had to put a number of new measures in place. Our biggest priority is the safety of our pupils and staff. We have followed national guidelines over how best to achieve that while ensuring things feel normal and welcoming.

We are here to support you to make the return as smooth as possible. There will be a special focus on health and wellbeing throughout the term across schools and nurseries. Our staff will do what they do best—they will work with your child to understand their experiences of lockdown, decide where they might need support, and put a plan in place to achieve that. That will be the case across all ages, abilities, subjects, and settings. Beyond that our priorities remain the same as ever—to help raise attainment and outcomes for all children and young people.

We know parents will have a lot of questions, and this leaflet aims to summarise the answers to the main ones. A more detailed FAQ is on the council website at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/openingschools. Please check it out—but if there is anything not covered there, your school or nursery will be happy to help.

Welcome—it's great to have you back.

Steven Quinn

Director of Children's Services, Renfrewshire Council

SAFETY AND HYGIENE

How are we keeping people safe?

The health and wellbeing of our children and young people is our biggest priority. The government guidance says no physical distancing is required between children.

However we will encourage young people, especially those in the senior years of secondary school, to physically distance where possible.

There will be no large gatherings such as assemblies or choirs, and secondary schools will aim to limit the movement of groups of young people around the school where they can.

There will be distancing between adults, and where possible between adults and children and young people—although clearly this will be harder to manage in nurseries and with younger primary pupils. Where staff cannot keep a two-metre distance and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (such as for 15 minutes or more), they may choose to wear a face covering.

Sharing of learning resources will be minimised—children will only have access to toys and equipment that are easy to clean. Children and young people may bring their own resources (such as pencil cases) to

school for their own use only and will be reminded to keep school bags on the floor and not on their desks or worktops.

How are we managing cleaning and hygiene?

We will have an enhanced cleaning regime across all buildings and have hired 100 new cleaners across Renfrewshire to manage this. Surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day, and all schools and nurseries will be cleaned at the end of the day or first thing in the morning.

There will be a focus on hand washing and this will be encouraged throughout the day. When children and young people come into the building, they will wash their hands before they settle in. Please ensure your child washes their hands before they leave each morning, and then when they arrive back home.

What happens if there is a suspected or confirmed case of Covid19?

We will treat any suspected cases of coronavirus in line with national guidance. If any pupil or staff member shows symptoms they will be isolated and sent home immediately, and asked to follow the protocol around testing and self-

isolation. If there is a positive test within a school or nursery we will follow the Scottish Government's Test and Protect guidelines.

The health authorities would be informed and we would follow their advice as to what to do to keep children and young people and staff safe.

LEARNING AND WELLBEING



What will my child be learning?

We are aware children and young people will have had different experiences while learning from home. Our teaching staff will be able to assess how each child is doing and how best to tailor the support they need to them. Across all settings, health and wellbeing will be a priority.

Nursery children will continue to get the chance to connect with each other and extend their interests. Nurseries will focus on the core areas of literacy and numeracy, allowing children to learn new skills and apply them through their play.

Primary schools will continue to focus on the evidence-based approaches already used to teach literacy and numeracy. They will also look to harness the benefits of outdoor learning—helping children be physically active, enjoy and learn about their natural environment, and relax.

Secondary school pupils will follow the normal curriculum and a full range of subject choices will be available. Personal and Social Education classes will focus on mental, emotional and social wellbeing, which we know will be important given the impact of lockdown.

What about children with additional support needs?

Plans will be in place to ensure that children with additional support needs are able to attend school safely. Staff in your child's school will have been considering the individual needs of your child and what they require when they return.

You should seek advice from your GP prior to your child returning to school if your child has an underlying health condition and/or was shielding. Please discuss any medical advice you are given with your child's school to ensure that we can support your child's return in the safest way possible.

How are we supporting mental health and wellbeing?

We appreciate the months spent in lockdown won't have been easy for parents or pupils and we are conscious of the need to help support children and young people back into school and nursery. All establishments have made mental

health and wellbeing a priority in their plans for the year ahead and our education psychology service has a package of existing programmes designed to help.



SCHOOL TRANSPORT



What's happening with school transport?

School transport will be provided as normal and will be regarded as an extension of the school estate—so there will be no need for physical distancing between children and young people, and face coverings are not needed. Children and young people should wash their hands before boarding the bus in the morning, and when they arrive back home.

We are working with our transport operators to put in place a process for cleaning school buses each day and that frequently-touched surfaces are cleaned after each journey.

If a pupil is travelling on public transport they should follow the national guidance by wearing face coverings and maintaining physical distancing from others.

For pupils who travel to school by dedicated school taxi transfer, physical distancing is not needed but children or young people should sit in the back seat if possible and face coverings worn if appropriate.

What's the plan for pick-ups and drop-offs?

Any changes to normal pick-up and drop-off arrangements will be communicated directly by your school. Parents should not enter the building unless required. If possible, parents should park further away and walk with their children to avoid congestion. Parents of children with additional support needs should speak to their school or nursery if special arrangements are needed.

We encourage pupils, parents, carers and staff to walk or cycle wherever it is possible and safe.

OTHER PRACTICAL INFO

Should my child be wearing uniform?

There is no council-wide policy regarding uniform—each school will make its own arrangements around this and will make you aware what they are. School uniforms/clothing should be washed/cleaned as normal.

What happens with school lunches?

We will initially provide packed lunches for all children and young people entitled to a free school meal and for those who wish to buy one. Each school will decide the best way to distribute these. This will reduce the number of pupils gathering in queues. We hope schools will be able to move to hot lunches in a few weeks' time.

What about breakfast clubs and out-of-school care?

Out-of-school care should now be available again in all places where it was provided pre-lockdown. Contact your own provider for details. We are hoping to get breakfast clubs back up and running soon and your child's school will let you know when this will be.



WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFO?



There is detailed information covering other topics such as national qualifications and our 1140 early learning and childcare expansion plans at www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools. Or you can speak to your child's school or nursery.

