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Dear Parent/Carer

Thank you for your continued patience and support since your child or children returned to school or nursery in August. Children, young people and staff have had to deal with many new ways of doing things including adapting to a different way of teaching and learning. This has brought new challenges and I am very grateful to everyone who has shown great resilience and effort to allow our schools and nurseries to operate as smoothly as possible.

The safety and wellbeing of our pupils and staff remains our top priority. We will continue to closely follow all national guidance designed to protect children, young people and staff. The guidance now also includes the introduction of young people in secondary schools being asked to wear a face covering when moving around the school. In addition, all children of school age are also asked to wear a face covering when travelling on school transport. It has been very encouraging to see so many of our children and young people comply with this guidance. I would ask for your continued cooperation in supporting your child with this by ensuring, where possible, that they have a face covering in their possession when they are going to school. Furthermore, that they know it is required in certain public areas, such as shops, before the school day, at lunchtime if they are leaving the school grounds, and on the way home.

Unfortunately, there have been positive covid-19 cases within schools in the last two months, and this reflects the number of cases across Renfrewshire and the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde health board area. We continue to work closely with the NHS public health teams and our own environmental health team to maintain a safe environment for our pupils and staff. Where contacts are identified in your child's school as a result of a positive case, NHS Test and Protect will be activated and you will be notified of this. If your child is identified as a close contact, you will receive a further notification advising of the need for your child to self-isolate for 14 days and given a date where they can return to school if they display no symptoms.

Parent and Carer contact details

Please ensure that your child's school has the correct contact details for you so we can contact you quickly if NHS Test and Protect has been activated. You should have already been asked for this information through our schools' annual data check. However, if you're not sure what details your school has for you, you can log onto ParentsPortal at <https://parentsportal.scot> to check and update your contact

information. If you aren't able to get online, please contact your child's school directly. Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Absences and covid-19

If your child is not well, they should remain at home and you should call the school to inform them. If your child or anyone in your household has covid-19 symptoms, then you and the rest of your household must stay at home and self-isolate. Anyone with symptoms should book a test and everyone should remain at home while you wait for test results. Please also inform your child's school as quickly as possible in case contact tracing is required. The symptoms of covid-19 include:

- a high temperature or fever
- a new continuous cough
- a loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste.

Only if a test result is negative and no one else in your household has symptoms can pupils return to school.

Further information is available from NHS Inform website - www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus

I appreciate that children identified as close contacts and having to thereafter self-isolate for 14 days can be very challenging for families and you may be concerned about the impact on their learning. If your child is asked to self-isolate, their school will contact you to direct you to resources and supports available while they are at home. Further details on this are available from your child's school.

If you need help with essential food or medication during your self-isolation period, please call the Local Assistance Helpline on 0800 111 4000.

Beginning and end of the school / nursery day

I recognise that many of our younger children require to be dropped off in the morning and picked up at the end of the school day. Our schools and nurseries have worked very hard at making this as safe and manageable as possible.

Your continued support with this is greatly appreciated. Maintaining two metres physical distancing and wearing a face covering while waiting at or near the school gates is strongly encouraged for the safety of everyone. This will also support the messages that we are giving our children about everyone's safety and wellbeing.

If you can walk to school with your child, or even park further away from the school to prevent congestion, please do so. Your support in ensuring our school gates are safe places is greatly appreciated.

National Qualifications

The Deputy First Minister recently announced a change to the national qualifications for next year. In summary:

- there will be no changes to national 1 to 4 qualifications;
- national 5 will not have the normal exam in May and instead the grade will be determined by continuous assessment throughout the year - exact details are still to be determined; and
- Higher and Advanced Higher exams are still planned to take place with the exam dates being pushed back by two weeks. Exam content will also be modified with details of this being sent to schools in the immediate future.

Our schools will ensure pupils and parents are given full details as they become available. This will include advice and guidance on how best to prepare for their qualifications.

Keeping you informed

In order to help us get information to you quickly we will update you via text message and when appropriate by email.

You can also find the latest information on our website. We will continue to update the coronavirus schools information pages with the most up to date information and we also publish copies of every letter on covid cases that are sent to parents and carers. You can check these pages at any time.

NHS Test and Protect letters - www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools/test-protect-letters

School health and safety advice - www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools/health-safety

Covid cases in school information - www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools/covid-cases

Please continue to follow the national guidance – FACTS – and keep safe.

Once again, many thanks to you and your child or children for the continued support. By continuing to work together we can strive to provide the best learning experience possible.

Yours sincerely



Steven Quinn
Director of Children's Services