

People Directorate

Depute Chief Executive and Director - People: Douglas Hutchison

County Buildings
Wellington Square
Ayr

KA7 1DR

Our Ref: DH/LD Your Ref

Date: 21 December 2020



Dear Parent / Carer

Following the First Minister's announcement on Saturday 19th December I want to update you on what will happen in January when your child would normally return to their school or early years centre. Where I refer to schools below I include early years centres.

- The First Minister has extended the Christmas holiday period to Monday 11th January 2021.
- From Monday 11th January schools will work remotely and there will be no in school teaching taking place until 18th January at the earliest.
- Childcare provision will be made for children of key workers in schools from the 6th of January. The 6th – 8th will be childcare only and from the 11th January provision will be made for childcare and learning in schools for children of key workers.
- You will need to apply for this service and a link to apply will be sent to you from your child's school or early years centre no later than the end of the day tomorrow. Applications need to be completed by 30th December to allow us to plan for the return in January. It is possible that we will not have processed all childcare requests by 6th January. If your child attends on 6th to 8th they will be catered for with definitive decisions on accessing childcare provision being communicated from 6th onwards.
- Schools will also make provision for children who have any vulnerability. Schools will make decisions about what this means and communicate directly with you. Pupils in all special schools and bases will automatically be considered vulnerable due to their complex needs and will not require to apply for childcare.
- Schools will be offering remote learning to all learners from 11th January. The provision in school will be similar to a homework club where there will be adults supervising, but not directly teaching. Teachers will be fully occupied organising remote learning for all children and young people. It is not the case that some pupils in school will be taught as normal and those at home will be learning remotely.
- If you meet the criteria for free school meals, payment will be made to you during the week beginning 11th January which will also cover 6th-8th January. Currently the payment is £15 a week and this payment only applies to school aged children whose parents meet qualifying criteria which are income related. This will be reduced by £3 for each day a child is physically present in school. Provision in school is likely to be a packed lunch. School meal arrangements will be communicated from the school, but on 6th – 8th if you are entitled to childcare, please provide a packed lunch for your child.

Responding to an announcement made at 5:30pm on a Saturday is always going to be challenging. Please be assured we will do everything possible to keep you updated on any further changes. Schools have been planning for the possibility of remote learning and are well prepared. Once schools close, please follow South Ayrshire Council on Facebook and Twitter for further updates.

Thank you once again for your patience and understanding in very challenging times.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Douglas Hutchison'.

Douglas Hutchison
Depute Chief Executive and Director - People