

People Directorate

Depute Chief Executive and Director - People: Douglas Hutchison

County Buildings
Wellington Square
Ayr
KA7 1DR

Our Ref: DH/LD

Your Ref:

Date: 24 June 2020



Dear Parent / Carer

You will now be aware of the Scottish Government announcement that all schools will fully reopen in August with no social distancing for pupils. The move to no social distancing for pupils is a significant change in the central planning assumptions we have been making which included 2 metre social distancing in line with existing Scottish Government guidance. There remain a number of questions which have not yet been clarified, including whether or not social distancing will be in place on school transport. In addition, we have been informed that there have been no changes yet to the guidance relating to early years provision. Existing early years guidance results in reduced capacity which makes it difficult to confirm the detail of early years places for the coming year. These issues will be clarified over the coming weeks.

Schools will now require to make a number of changes before the start date in August. Classes had already been reconfigured to take account of social distancing and will now be rearranged. Risk assessments will also now be reviewed in light of the changes. We will also need to carry out further risk assessments in the context of all pupils being back in order to ensure the health and safety of all staff and pupils. It is our intention to do everything possible to ensure schools reopen fully in August but there are logistical challenges that need to be overcome. School holidays start on Friday of this week for pupils and for all school staff which limits the opportunities to make the necessary changes.

It is our hope and intention to have all pupils back in August, however, the late change in policy makes this a challenge. What we intend to do therefore is to continue with the planned start date of 12th August but the first week, up to and including Friday 14th August, will be a soft start. This means that your child may not be in all day or every day for the first three days of term. Our current aim is that from **Monday 17th August** all pupils will be back full time. Your child's school will be in touch with you directly before the start of the new term to let you know what the specific arrangements are in your child's school. The school will also let you know about any specific staggered start and finish times which are designed to minimise any crowding at larger schools during pick up and drop off.

All of this depends on the virus continuing to be suppressed. What I have set out is our current position but I recognise it may change in the light of public health advice. I thank you for the continued support of your child's school and assure you that all staff in education continue to focus on ensuring the best quality of education for all our children and young people.

Yours faithfully

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

Douglas Hutchison
Depute Chief Executive and Director - People