



Director of Children's Services: Helen Budge

Children's Services

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Our Ref: HB/RC/af/H30/COVID-19/Cor/013
Your Ref:

Date: 22 December 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Information to all Parents and Carers: Arrangements for Schools and Early Learning and Childcare Settings Opening in January 2021

I am delighted that we have been able to provide two full terms of in school learning during this pandemic for all our children and young people across Shetland. As we come towards Christmas, I now have to write to you to update you on the changes to the arrangements for schools and early learning and childcare settings opening in January 2021.

On Saturday 19 December, the First Minister announced that Shetland and the other Scottish islands were to go into Level 3 of the Scottish Government's Strategic Framework five-level protection system to manage the spread of coronavirus across Scotland from Boxing Day for three weeks (there will be a review after two weeks). <https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-scotlands-strategic-framework/>

School and early learning and childcare staff will return to work as scheduled and planned for Shetland on Wednesday 6 January for the In-Service day.

Schools and early learning and childcare settings will open for childcare and wellbeing support for vulnerable children and children of key workers on Thursday 7 January. All other children and young people will have their Christmas holidays extended to include Thursday 7 and Friday 8 January 2021.

There will be remote learning for all children and young people from Monday 11 January to Friday 15 January 2021. This will be undertaken in school for vulnerable children and children of key workers.

School Transport will be running as normal from Thursday 7 January but this will only be for those pupils who have been identified as entitled to receive in-school childcare and wellbeing support and in-school remote learning.

The aim is for schools and early learning and childcare settings to re-open to all children and young people from Monday 18 January but this is dependent on the virus being under control.

On Monday 21 December, the Scottish Government published further information to support local authorities plan for the implementation of the announcements made on Saturday:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-school-re-opening-arrangements-for-january-2021/>

The contingency plans which all school and early learning and childcare settings prepared for this type of remote learning has supported the development of the arrangements for the start of the new term in January 2021. This will be similar to the remote learning that our children and young people experienced during the lockdown between March and July 2020.

The safest place for your child during this period of time is at home.

Some families may be entitled to access school and early learning and childcare during this time. This is different to Critical Childcare that was in place previously. Parents can complete an application form online, and should provide as much information as possible. The application form can be found here: <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/schools/information-key-workers-january-2021/1>

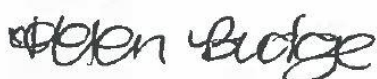
The application process will open from tomorrow, 23 December at 9am, and will close on 30 December 2020 at 3pm. Families where there is one parent working from home will not be eligible for keyworker status. Applying for your child to attend school between 7 and 15 January 2021 should be a last resort after all other options have been exhausted.

Families will be informed of the outcome of their application as soon as possible after 30 December 2020.

I have written to those parents whose children have additional support needs and are entitled to attend school from Thursday 7 January 2021, so apologies if you are now receiving this information for a second time.

School staff will be available on Wednesday 6 January 2021 to help you with any queries you may have about this return to school but in the meantime I would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours sincerely



Helen Budge
Director of Children's Services