



Director of Children's Services: Helen Budge

All Parents and Carers

Our Ref: HB/RC/kk/S40-37/corr/21/010
Your Ref:

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Date: 11 August 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

The new school session, 2021/22: update to all parents and carers on COVID-19 mitigations and measures in schools and early learning and childcare settings

I am looking forward to all children and young people starting, or returning to, their school or early learning and childcare setting on Wednesday 18 August 2021. Ahead of next Wednesday, I write to clarify the COVID-19 mitigations and measures, which will continue to be in place in schools at the start of the new term.

1. Physical distancing requirements in schools and early learning and childcare settings

For the first six weeks of the new term, two metre physical distancing between adults, and between adults and children and young people, should remain in place in all schools and early learning and childcare settings. There is no requirement for physical distancing between children and young people, although it should be encouraged for secondary aged pupils where possible.

2. Health and safety measures

Other health and safety measures that were in place in school and early learning and childcare settings prior to the end of last term will also continue, including:

- The use of hand sanitisers throughout the school day.
- Daily hand sanitisation for all children and young people on arrival at their setting.
- One way systems throughout settings where possible.
- Enhanced daily cleaning and further cleaning undertaken daily at the end of each pupil day.
- Careful monitoring to ensure the appropriate level of ventilation and adequate air flow throughout school buildings. CO2 monitors will continue to be deployed, monitoring the level of CO2, and temperature in classrooms.

3. Asymptomatic Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing

All secondary pupils are strongly encouraged to restart twice-weekly at-home LFD testing in the week prior to return. Ideally, the second test should be taken either in the morning before leaving for the first day of the new term, Wednesday 18 August 2021, or the evening before. We are also strongly encouraging all staff to test twice-weekly using this same process.

Schools provided lateral flow test kits to secondary aged children and young people prior to the summer break, which can be used for these purposes. If you do not have test kits, you can access them in a range of different ways, including ordering online for home delivery, or collecting kits from your nearest test site or pharmacy. Further information is available at: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): getting tested in Scotland - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/topics/coronavirus/covid-19/getting-tested-in-scotland)

This approach to lateral flow testing is designed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks when settings re-open.

4. The use of face coverings in schools

For the first six weeks of the term, arrangements around face coverings are as follows:

- In secondary settings, face coverings will continue to be required to be worn by all staff and all pupils, unless exemptions apply, in the school building throughout the school day.
- In primary and early learning and childcare settings, face coverings should be worn by adults where they cannot keep two metres from other adults and /or children and young people. Face coverings should also be used by adults when not working directly with children, for example when moving around settings.
- Any primary aged child wishing to wear a face covering should be permitted to do so but it is not a requirement.
- Face coverings should be worn by parents and carers and other visitors to the school site (whether entering the building or otherwise), including parents and carers at drop-off and pick-up points.
- It is the responsibility of secondary aged children and young people to bring a face covering to school, although there will continue to be a collection of face coverings available in school offices.

5. Arrangements for parents and carers at drop-off and pick-up times and accessing settings

Parents and carers should continue to avoid contact with other parents, children and young people at the school gates, on the way to and from settings, in order to reduce the risk of community spread/outbreaks of COVID-19.

As already intimated, face coverings must be worn by parents/carers and other visitors to all school sites whether entering the building or not.

Please also be advised that during the first few weeks of the school term, visitors to schools will continue to be for essential purposes only. Therefore, for general queries,

parents/carers should make contact with their child's school over the phone, or email, in the first instance.

6. The organisation of children into groupings/bubbles in school

Please note that there will be a revised approach to contact tracing from Monday 09 August 2021, whereby children and young people will not necessarily be required to self-isolate for 10 days if they are identified as a contact of a positive case, providing they test negative with a PCR test and remain asymptomatic. This means that the practice of grouping children into bubbles, during the school day, including at break and lunchtimes for COVID-19 mitigation reasons, is no longer required and will be removed early into the new term in all settings.

7. School Transport

The position on face coverings and physical distancing on dedicated school transport will align with the expected position on public transport: only young people aged 12 and over are now required to wear face coverings. Therefore, children aged between 5 and 11, who were previously asked to wear face coverings, no longer need to do so. One metre distancing between drivers and children and young people on dedicated school transport should continue to be observed where possible. Physical distancing restrictions on public transport are being removed from the 09 August 2021. Existing arrangements for cleaning, hygiene and ventilation on school transport will continue.

8. Vaccinations

On the 04 August 2021, it was announced that all 16 and 17-year-olds in the United Kingdom will start being offered a first dose of the Covid jab within weeks, after the recommendation from the Joint Committee on Vaccinations and Immunisations (JCVI). This follows the earlier JCVI decision to vaccinate children aged between 12 and 17 from certain vulnerable groups.

9. COVID-19 Symptoms

As we start the new school term, please continue to be vigilant to the symptoms of COVID-19 within your family household:

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

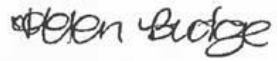
If anyone in your family develops any of these symptoms, you should immediately self-refer for a coronavirus test by completing an online form on the NHS Inform website. This form is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and will be picked up by the testing team as soon as possible. If you are unable to access the online form, you can contact a dedicated phone line 01595 532 030 between 9 -12.30 and 2–5pm Monday to Friday. You should self-isolate until you have the test results.

In the event of a confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 connected to a school or early learning and childcare setting, officers in Children's Services, the school's Head Teacher and colleagues in Public Health will work closely to assess the situation and clarify next-steps, communicating regularly with all the setting's parents and carers.

Finally, parents and carers who have any concerns about their child starting or returning to school, or their early learning and childcare setting, should discuss this with their Head Teacher or another promoted member of staff within the setting.

Thank you for your continued support and I wish everyone all the very best with the new term.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Budge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small circular mark at the beginning.

Helen Budge
Director of Children's Services