



Education Resources  
Executive Director **Tony McDaid**

Parent /Carer

**Our ref:** TMcD/DD  
**Your ref:**  
**Phone Helpline:**  
**Date:** August 2021

Dear Parent/Carer

### **Information Update – Schools reopening in August 2021**

Following the First Minister's announcement on Tuesday 3 August, I write to inform you of the health and safety arrangements for your child's return to school on Monday, 16 August 2021. I would wish to begin by saying how much we are looking forward to welcoming children and young people back to our schools and nurseries for the new session.

I understand fully that as parents/carers you will wish to know about the preventative measures we have taken and will continue to take to mitigate against the spread of the coronavirus. The good news is that there is some relaxation of the measures which can take place from the start of the new school session.

I can advise you that updated national guidance developed by the Scottish Government which is based on current scientific advice is now available: [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): guidance on reducing the risks in schools - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/pages/1-1-introduction.aspx). This will support a safe return to school for children, young people and staff.

The safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff is paramount and our aim is to continue to provide a safe learning environment for everyone. I have also set out below some of the key changes that will occur in preparation for our schools and nursery classes re-opening in August.

#### **Return dates**

Teachers and staff return to school on Thursday, 12 and Friday, 13 August 2021. These are in-service days which provide time for staff to prepare in advance of children and pupils returning to school/nursery.

Children and young people return on **Monday, 16 August 2021** and your child's school will confirm start and finish times using the usual channels of communication.

#### **Testing before schools re-open**

All **staff and secondary aged pupils** are strongly encouraged to restart their twice-weekly at home Lateral Flow Device testing prior to the start of the new term and to enter their results, positive or negative, into the NHS portal. LFD test kits are available free from schools and local pharmacies.

#### **Physical Distancing/Bubbles**

Previous arrangements for creating smaller groups in schools commonly known as 'bubbles' are no longer required. However, we will continue to encourage appropriate physical distancing, where possible, to further minimise any risk. This means we will avoid bringing children and young people together in large groups and, for example, this means there will be no large assemblies for an initial period.

One metre physical distancing between adults, and between adults and children and young people, is still a requirement in the school estate. However, as schools already have physical distancing



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arrangements that work well and do not limit capacity, it is expected that staff will continue with the two metre distancing arrangements at the start of the term, where possible.

### **Self-isolation rules**

We welcome the changes to the self-isolation rules. The approach of requiring whole classes or groupings of pupils to self-isolate as close contacts is no longer necessary in normal circumstances. Therefore, there will no longer be a need to isolate whole groups of children and contact tracing will be undertaken by Test & Protect (T&P). If someone is identified by T&P as being a close contact the following new rules apply:-

- **Children aged 5 to 18 years** will not have to isolate for 10 days, so long as they remain asymptomatic and have a negative PCR.
- **Under 5's** will not have to isolate so long as they remain asymptomatic but there is no mandatory requirement for them to have a negative PCR.
- **Adults** who are double vaccinated and have a negative PCR will no longer have to isolate if they are a contact of a positive case.

### **Face-coverings**

Face coverings should continue to be worn by adults wherever they cannot keep a 2m distance from other adults and/or children and young people (unless exempt) :-

#### *Adults*

- All adults in communal areas of primary schools and early years establishments.
- Parents and other visitors including parents at drop-off and pick-up.
- Early Learning and Childcare staff do not need to wear face coverings when interacting with nursery children.

#### *Pupils*

- All pupils in secondary schools are expected to wear a face-covering during class and in communal areas.

#### *School transport*

- In line with the current arrangements for public transport, **only young people aged 12 and over and adults** are required to wear face-coverings on school transport. (previously aged 5 and above).

### **Safety measures to keep us all safe**

Health and safety sits at the heart of our plans, with risk assessments and infection prevention and control measures in place. Hand sanitisers will continue to be available at the entrances and in all appropriate areas across schools. Secondary schools will have hand sanitisers available in all classrooms and in primary schools all classrooms with sinks will enable children to handwash regularly.

Enhanced cleaning routines will continue to be implemented and there will be clear signage throughout school buildings to reinforce the infection prevention and control measures in place.

Parents/carers are still asked to avoid congregating at school gates and there are still some restrictions in place in the meantime on entering school buildings, which we realise is not easy, but schools across Scotland are being asked to maintain current arrangements for a while longer.

The Scottish Government will review the position again towards the end of September with an expectation that will be a further relaxation of other Covid-19 mitigation practices

**Vaccinations**

We are now seeing the vaccine offered to everyone aged 16 and over and, in line with JCVI guidance, it has also been offered to some young people from key groups who are aged between 12 to 15 years.

All 16-17 year olds can now get their COVID-19 vaccine appointment by text or email by registering here - <https://www.nhsinform.scot/vaccineregistration>.

**Thank you**

The past 18 months have been an unprecedented and challenging time for everyone. However, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for all you have done to support your child's learning during recent times.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony McDaid". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and 'M'.

Tony McDaid  
**Executive Director (Education Resources)**