



SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

A parent/carer's guide to starting school – August 2020

Primary and Early Years

We are looking forward to welcoming our children and young people back and have implemented a range of measures within each of our schools and educational establishments, in line with Scottish Government guidance, to make everyone feel assured about the safety, risk assessment and infection control measures we have put in place.

We have prepared this Q&A to let you know what will happen on your child's return to school or nursery class and we have also produced a video to let you see the cleaning, hand-sanitising, signage and safety measures we have put in place.

<https://youtu.be/IH4jet-PXdc>

This general information should be read in conjunction with guidance that schools may issue to parents to reflect individual contexts.

Q. What will learners be doing in school?

The predominant focus of learning initially in the new session will be centred around a recovery curriculum which will emphasise the importance of health and wellbeing as well as Literacy and Numeracy, extending to other curricular areas as appropriate. Some practical lessons may not be available immediately when children and young people return – e.g. aspects of music. They will be reintroduced during the term once guidelines on how to do it safely have been developed by Education Scotland. Nursery children will follow a play based curriculum which will involve many soft toys and furnishings being removed from rooms in addition to toys that cannot easily be disinfected.

- ✓ Subject specific guidance relating to physical education and other practical subjects is currently being created by Education Scotland and will be published as soon as it is available.
- ✓ All young people will be able to enjoy as much time as possible outdoors as part of their learning, breaks and lunch time. Dedicated areas inside and outside the building will be allocated for specific groups with limited sharing of resources.

Q. What safety measures have been put in place to support return?

A range of measures are in place within each of our schools and nurseries in line with Scottish Government guidance. I want to reassure you that while safety is the priority, we will do everything we can to reduce the impact of this on the school or nursery day and your child's learning experience. As all schools and nurseries are different, we feel that it is better you hear direct from them and they will contact you about any specific requirements.

Risk assessments have been carried out before the reopening of all school and nursery buildings in August. This is a requirement based on the duty of care which the council has for

staff, children and young people and they have been developed in partnership with the trade unions. There will be appropriate signage on aspects of infection prevention in all of our buildings. Other things include: -

Enhanced Cleaning

There will be a weekly clean using an electrostatic spray and a product which kills COVID-19 within 5 minutes, leaving a lasting protective coating on surfaces. In addition, there will be a daily clean and further cleaning of high density touchpoints during the day.

Distancing

Children and young people do not have to physically distance from each other however, in line with scientific guidance, schools have to make efforts where possible to keep children and young people in the same groups within the duration of the school day. This may result in changes to drop off/pick up arrangements and interval and lunch time so that groups can be kept physically distanced.

Adults should keep 2 metres from each other and wherever possible from children and young people. If for any reason this cannot happen, there may be a requirement for staff to wear a face covering.

Wherever possible, classroom windows and doors will be left open to ensure that rooms and other areas are well ventilated throughout the day. There will also be a focus on more outdoor learning (weather permitting).

Assemblies, concerts, choirs and instrumental music are prohibited until further notice.

However, there are standard measures in place for everyone:

- **Robust hygiene and cleaning procedures** have been introduced across all nurseries and schools. This includes regular hand washing and the cleaning of surfaces and equipment throughout the day. All nurseries and schools will be cleaned at the end of the school day.
- **Hand washing/cleaning** – on arrival into school or nursery, children and young people will wash their hands before they settle into the centre, classroom or learning space. We also ask that children and young people wash their hands before they leave home in the morning.
- **Physical distancing** - as per the Scottish Government guidance, children and young people do not have to physically distance while in nursery, school or on school transport. However, we will encourage physical distancing where possible to further minimise any risk. In addition, we will avoid bringing children and young people together in large groups such as school events or assemblies. Physical distancing will also be in place between staff and children and young people where possible. Visitors coming into nurseries and schools will also be restricted and parents should not enter school buildings except in emergencies and are asked to contact the school or nursery direct in advance.
- **Lunch times** - may be staggered, where possible, to reduce children and young people queuing in large numbers. Children and young people can bring their own packed lunch. Hot meals will be provided, and menus published.

- **Home to school transport** provided by the council will continue as normal for eligible children and young people. They do not have to physically distance and will not need to wear face coverings. However, no food or drink should be consumed while on a school bus. For children and young people travelling on public transport, please follow Scottish Government guidance on face coverings and physical distancing.
- **Personal belongings** - Some restrictions will be in place in relation to personal belongings. Children at nursery should continue to bring a change of clothing but please avoid bringing toys from home where possible. Children and young people may bring in their own pencil cases and other materials for their own use as normal. We will ask that school bags are kept on the floor.
- **Parking** - If arriving to school or nursery by car, please park as far away as possible from the building to avoid congestion. If you can, please consider walking or taking another form of active travel.
- **Restrictions** – the Scottish Government guidance advises that parent/carers should not enter the building or classrooms and that physical distancing of 2 metres takes place at playground entrances/exits. We appreciate this is a change particularly at the beginning of a new term when children and young people start school, but this is designed to keep you and everyone in the community safe.

Q. What is the guidance on visits by parents/carers and others to a school?

The Scottish Government guidance sets out strict arrangements which apply to parents, carers, peripatetic staff and other visitors. Parents/carers should not enter school buildings except in an emergency and must contact the school in advance. We appreciate this is a change particularly at the beginning of a new term when children start school but this is designed to keep you and everyone in the community safe.

Large gatherings of parents/carers outside of school/nursery buildings should be avoided and physical distancing of 2 metres as far as practicable should be maintained.

Please follow us on social media for regular updates and check the school website. If you have any specific queries or concerns, please contact the school office.

Q. What can children bring to school and equipment will they need?

- ✓ Children should bring their own water bottle.
- ✓ Children should bring a school bag, including personal stationery items. **Personal belongings should not be shared.**
- ✓ Children should wear their school uniform and this should be cleaned as normal; individual schools will advise on arrangements for PE.
- ✓ Special consideration on the return to education has been given to those children with additional support needs.

Q. What if someone feels unwell or is ill?

Do not send your child to school if they are unwell or if someone in the household displays any of the virus symptoms below: The whole school community should be vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19, and understand what actions they should take if someone develops them. The most common symptoms are:

- New continuous cough
- Fever/high temperature
- Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste

If during the school day a child becomes ill, they will be moved to a room with a member of staff, Parents will be asked to collect their child who will not be permitted to travel home on dedicated school transport.

Should the observed numbers of children or staff presenting in the school with respiratory symptoms increase markedly within a short period, the Headteacher will inform NHSL of this occurrence. NHSL will gather and assess evidence to determine if there is a likelihood that COVID-19 is being transmitted in the educational establishment. It may call a Problem Assessment Group to undertake this action.

Q. What is the position with regards to face masks?

The Scottish Government and health advice is that pupils and staff do not need to wear face coverings in a school or educational setting if physical distancing is being observed. However, we recognise that this is a matter of personal choice and if a child or young person or adult wishes to wear one they can.

Children who travel on public transport are required to wear a face covering and they should keep this safe in a container and or bag when not in use and not take it out in school.

Q. What is the advice on to travel to and from School?

We ask that children walk, cycle and scoot to school, avoiding the car as much as possible.

If travelling on public transport remember to comply with rules on face coverings and distancing. As public transport capacity may be less parents/carers are asked to ensure their child has enough time to get to school. While not in use face coverings should be kept in a plastic bag inside the school bag.

If travelling on school transport there is no requirement to physically distance and no need for face coverings.

More detailed information for those who use both mainstream and additional support needs transport will be issued via the school.

Please note that 'Privilege transport' applications are being held on file at present and may be allocated by the end of October.

Q. How do we drop off / collect children?

As children will be kept in groupings during the day, this may also result in changes to drop off/pick up arrangements and interval and lunch times in order that such groups can be kept physically distanced. Parents are reminded that 2 metre distancing applies for adults around school gates. Schools will provide more information on individual arrangements and the expectations of parents.

There are exceptions for children with additional support needs or disabilities who use school transport, including taxis or who get dropped off and schools will put in local arrangements to support children.

Q. Is there a change to parking arrangements?

If you have to travel to school or nursery by car, please park as far away as possible from the building to avoid congestion. If you can, please consider walking or taking another form of active travel.

Q. What are the arrangements at lunchtime?

Staggering break and lunchtimes may take place in order to reduce numbers of young people in the dining area.

Catering facilities will resume: Primary 1-3 will continue to receive free school meals as will any child who has an entitlement and a packed lunch is allowed in school. Parents are asked to wipe down the packed lunch box each day.

Q. What is the current position with breakfast and after school care clubs?

Breakfast clubs and after school care clubs are on hold at present. Further guidance from the Scottish Government on a phased return of after school clubs later in August is being considered.

We are looking to re-start breakfast clubs later on but it maybe September before we can look at this.

Q. What is the process if a child becomes symptomatic.? Is there a dedicated room where children can be left supervised /unsupervised safely till collection?

Yes, if someone becomes unwell, they will be asked to go home and or be shown to a designated room. Staff will then use face mask/appropriate PPE. The room will be closed until cleaned, and refuse will be disposed of in a bin with a lid.

Q. How many thermometers do you have? Is there a record of staff trained in using them? Record of cleaning them?

Current health advice is not to use thermometers in a school setting. The view being staff are not trained in this and this is best done if at all by health professionals

Q. How Robust are your track and trace measures, for contacts?

Test and Protect

NHS Lanarkshire and Health Protection Scotland are finalising a guidance note and protocol on 'test and protect' for schools and educational settings.

The emphasis will be on the need to continue to observe the preventative measures like good hygiene, distancing and not being complacent.

The protocol will outline clearly what will happen if there is an identified positive case in relation to an adult, child, or young person in a school or educational setting.

NHS will convene an incident management team (an assessment team to look at each case on an individual basis, two cases at present is deemed a cluster). The assessment will involve senior public health professionals, the Head Teacher or rep, Education Resources rep and council rep (e.g. Environmental Health or H&S) to determine the next steps and consider if a school/setting should be closed.

The safety and wellbeing of individuals and the community will be the determinant factor in the decision-making process.

The establishment of incident management team by NHS is a well-established public health procedure and education is a key partner given our duty of care for children, young people and staff.

Q. How many children need to be symptomatic before they would close the school?

As above assessment and likely to be when two cases or if there is a community outbreak schools may be closed.

Q. Do staff have access to full PPE? Have they been trained how to put it on and remove it safely?

The guidance sets out that the wearing of face masks is not required. However, individual risk assessments will be undertaken to determine whether PPE is required for staff who provide personal care and support to a child.

Our approach is that staff and pupils are free to wear a face covering if they wish to do so.

The risk assessment and guidance advise that how to wear and dispose of face coverings should be clearly outlined

Helpful links for parents

You may find the information bulletin produced for parents by parents and published by the National Parent Forum for Scotland helpful: www.npfs.org.uk

We recognise that there may be other questions you may have and whilst it is usually best to contact your child's school you can contact us by email on: Educationcovid19@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

You can also follow us on social media for regular updates and check the school website.

We are all in this together and we need everyone to do the right thing to keep us all safe.