



Boghall Primary School – COVID-19 Schools Re-opening Newsletter



**Issue 1 – 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you and your family are well and have enjoyed a peaceful summer holiday.

As we move towards the start of a new session and in response to the Scottish Government's Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 published last Thursday, I wanted to write to you to give you some additional information that I am able to at this time. This first Newsletter is detailed in response to the Government guidance and I will update periodically to keep you as informed as I possibly can.

Along with this Newsletter we will send a YouTube video link on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020 to give you specific details for day 1 and other important information.

We look forward to welcoming back all of our children to Boghall Primary and those new children joining us in the nursery, P1 and throughout the school.

Kind regards,

Mr Neil



## **Introduction**

The Scottish Government have stated that in the light of this greatly improved situation with regard to suppression of the virus, and in the context of the vital importance of school to a child's development, wellbeing and right to education, the balance of risk is now in favour of children returning to school full-time. We are looking forward to welcoming children back to school as we know how important the structure that school brings to children's lives and their health and wellbeing, educational progress and attainment.

The return to full-time school reflects the latest scientific evidence and advice and the significant progress that Scotland has made in suppressing the virus. The Scottish Government has agreed with partners in the Education Recovery Group that schools will begin to reopen on the 11<sup>th</sup> August and expects all pupils to be in school full-time by the 18<sup>th</sup> August at the very latest. The timetable on the last page of this Newsletter provides the days that children should attend between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> of August.

The return to school will not be a return to normality as we must remain vigilant and continue to manage the risks of COVID-19.

The Scottish Government will continue to monitor the changes in incidence of COVID-19, and the impact of implementation of this guidance in schools will be closely monitored at the national and local level and guidance will be kept under review and updated when necessary. This means we will also need to be able to adapt to local issues, e.g. outbreaks or local increases in cases of COVID-19, and follow any locally-determined advice and guidance.

This Newsletter will provide information on:

- Risk Assessment
- Additional Support
- School Operations



## **Risk Assessment**

In school we are updating our risk assessments to reflect the revised planning of a full return to school, to help manage risks effectively for children and staff returning to full-time learning.

The areas covered within the risk assessments include:

- Enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning
- Minimising contact between individuals and groups
- PPE and other protective barrier measures
- Staying vigilant and responding to COVID-19 symptoms
- Enhanced surveillance, testing and outbreak management
- Children, young people and staff who are clinically vulnerable

### **Enhanced hygiene and environmental cleaning**

#### *Personal hygiene*

We need to ensure that all children, staff and any others for whom it is necessary to enter the school estate to maintain COVID-secure personal hygiene throughout the day. The key COVID-secure personal hygiene measures that all children and staff will follow are:

- frequent washing/sanitising of hands for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly, and always when entering/leaving the building, before/after eating and after using the toilet;
- encouraging children, young people and staff to avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose; and
- using a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze, and use bins that are emptied regularly for tissue waste.

It will be the responsibility of every individual in the school to observe good hygiene practice to minimise the risk of infection and we will make this a key priority for learning on the first day of the new session for all children and will reinforce this on an ongoing basis. Signage will also be used appropriately, including in toilets.

#### **Please note the following measure that will also be in place within the school:**

- The movement of children and staff between classrooms will be minimised wherever possible.
- Children should not bring toys or other personal belongings from home to school. Children will be able to bring a school bag with essential items for school. (e.g: a water bottle which is filled at home each day, snack, indoor shoes)
- Please do not send in a PE kit at the moment, further guidance will be issued in due course.
- Children may bring packed lunch to school.
- Children and staff can take books and other resources home. Cleaning between uses will be in accordance with the Health Protection Scotland Guidance.
- Children will be given basic supplies that will not be shared.
- Enhanced cleaning in all West Lothian schools has been put in place using Electrostatic Cleaning which provides long lasting protection against bacteria.

## **Minimising contact between individuals and groups**

The COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues has published scientific advice on physical distancing in schools.

The advice states: *"Subject to continued suppression of the virus, and to surveillance and mitigations being in place, the balance of the evidence suggests that no distancing should be required between children in primary schools. The evidence is less clear for older pupils but at present we support the same approach being taken in secondary schools on the basis of the balance of known risks, the effectiveness of mitigations and the benefits to young people of being able to attend school."*

It goes on to state:

*"In both primary and secondary settings, the preference would always be to avoid large gatherings and crowded spaces and, wherever possible, to keep children and young people within the same groups for the duration of the school day. In giving this advice we recognise the practical challenges. Where possible, timetabling should be reviewed to reduce movement of groups of pupils around the school estate as much as possible."*

### *Physical distancing between children in primary schools*

On the basis of the scientific advice, and subject to all other risk mitigation measures set out in this advice being appropriately implemented, there is no requirement for physical distancing between children in primary schools.

In line with the scientific advice, efforts will be made to keep children within their class group for the duration of the school day. This means that classes will remain in their class group for the majority of their time within school. At this time we will not be conducting whole school assemblies.

The school day, break and lunchtimes have also been adjusted to support school organisation.

### *Physical distancing and minimising contact for adults*

We are required to ensure to the two metre physical distancing between adults, and between adults and children and who are not from the same household is maintained. This includes non-staff adult visitors to the school e.g. contractors, deliveries etc. Adult visitors to schools will be strictly limited only to those that are necessary to support children or the running of the school and arrangements should be communicated clearly to staff and the wider school community. This means that parents will not be allowed to freely enter the school building and should you require to enter the building this should only be through the main entrance through prior arrangement by making an appointment via the school office.

Maintaining 2m distancing between adults and children whenever possible will help mitigate risk, but it is acknowledged that this is not always possible or desirable, particularly when working with younger children or children with additional support needs who may require personal or intimate care. Where adults cannot keep 2m distance and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (about 15 minutes or more), face coverings will be worn (or, in certain limited circumstances, PPE).

### **Drop off/pick up**

The arrangements for parents/carers to drop off and collect children require careful consideration, to ensure that large gatherings of people can be avoided and physical distancing between adults and children of different groupings is maintained.

### **Please note the following arrangements for dropping off and picking up:**

Monday to Thursday

8.40am – 3.10pm/3.15pm

Children should continue to arrive between 8.40am and 8.50am and enter their allocated entrance.

To reduce crowds in the playground and surrounding streets, sibling groups will be dismissed at 3.10pm and all other children will be dismissed at 3.15pm.

Friday

8.40am – 12.25pm/12.30pm

Children should continue to arrive between 8.40am and 8.50am and enter their allocated entrance.

To reduce crowds in the playground and surrounding streets, sibling groups will be dismissed at 12.25pm and all other children will be dismissed at 12.30pm.

**Children and Parents/Carers should be careful to respect social distancing when entering and exiting the school grounds.**

## **PPE and other protective barrier measures**

### *PPE*

For the majority of staff in schools, PPE will not normally be required or necessary. Where it is required or necessary, the following arrangements will apply.

### *Face coverings*

Face coverings will not be required for most children and young people (those clinically advised to wear a covering are an exception). Where adults cannot keep 2m distance and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (about 15 minutes or more), face coverings will be worn.

In other circumstances, adults in schools (including the school environment, such as at the school gate) will not need to wear face coverings as long as they can maintain 2m distancing.

Anyone (whether child, young person or adult) wishing to wear a face covering in will be allowed to do so. Evidence suggests that face coverings do not provide significant protection for the wearer, rather they primarily reduce the risk of transmission and help suppress the virus.



**Wear a  
face  
covering**

## Staying vigilant and responding to COVID-19 symptoms

The whole school community should be vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19, and to understand what actions they should take if someone develops them. The most common symptoms are:

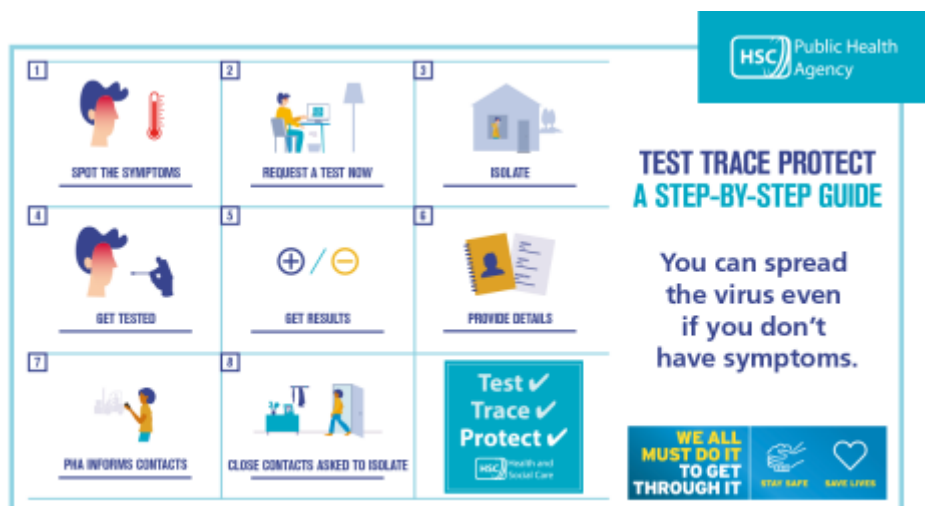
- new continuous cough
- fever/high temperature
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia).

All staff working in the school, along with the children in our care, will be supported to follow up to date health protection advice on household or self- isolation if they or someone in their household exhibits COVID-19 symptoms, or if they have been identified by NHS contact tracers as a close contact of someone with the virus.

It is essential that people do not attend school if symptomatic, but instead self-isolate (along with their household) and follow guidance on NHS Inform and from [Test and Protect](#).

Children must know that they must inform a member of staff if they feel unwell with symptoms of COVID-19. If the affected person has mild symptoms arrangements to pick the child from school will be made, (preferably this should be another adult member of their household) and follow the national guidance for households with possible COVID-19 infection including testing and self-isolation. Any child awaiting collection will be placed in isolation with an adult, who will sit which is at least 2 metres away.

**Any child or member of staff who has symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend school and follow the Test and Protect measures.**



## **Enhanced surveillance, testing and outbreak management**

The Scottish Government are developing additional surveillance programme within schools and data will be used to inform decision-makers at different levels as they consider any adjustments to make to arrangements and guidance.

### *Test and Protect*

The effective application of [Test and Protect](#) in the school environment will be an important means of preventing any spread of the virus. The key initial step is the self-isolation and rapid testing of all symptomatic children and staff as stated above. Other children and staff members will not be required to self-isolate unless contacted by the contact tracing service. If a child or staff member tests positive, the local health protection teams (HPTs) will assess what action is needed and advise the school.

If a child or their parent/carer or staff member is contacted by a contact tracer and told to self-isolate for fourteen days, arrangements will be made to allow that person to leave school to self-isolate at home straight away.

### *Outbreak management*

The management of outbreaks of infectious disease in schools is led by local health protection teams (HPTs) alongside local partners, such as schools and local authorities. Actions and decisions will be made by the health protection teams that we will be required to follow.

If an outbreak is confirmed, we will work with our HPT to manage it.

## **Children and staff who are clinically vulnerable**

Clinically vulnerable staff are returning to work with appropriate risk assessment, including appropriate physical distancing staying 2 metres away from others wherever possible, in line with current advice on the return to school.

Shielding has been paused from 1 August. We expect that children and staff who were shielding will be able to return to school, unless given advice from a GP or healthcare provider not to. If your child has been given specific advice to continue shielding we would ask that you contact the school on 11 August.



## **Additional Support**

### *Support for children and young people with Additional Support Needs*

Every child will have different levels of required support. Where we identify a need for any child we will work with parents/carers to ensure appropriate plans are in place that also allow the safety measures to protect adults and children, this may involve staff wearing a face covering or PPE as appropriate, and regularly wash their hands before and after contact.

### *Support for anxious children, young people, families and staff*

The past few months have been a time of considerable change and there will undoubtedly be moments of anxiety. Please contact us via the school office to discuss any personal circumstances that may affect your child on their return to school.

### *Support for Minority Ethnic children, young people and staff*

There is some wider evidence that children and adults from a Minority Ethnic background who are infected with COVID-19 seem to be at higher risk of severe disease. If you feel additional supports are required for your child, please do not hesitate in contacting the school via the school office.

### *Individual risk assessments*

Where appropriate individual risk assessments will be in place to support individuals in the groups above.

## **School Operations**

### ***Promoting attendance and reducing absence***

The Scottish Government recognise that some Parents and Carers may be concerned about their child returning to school, and consider withholding their child until reassurance is provided. I would hope that this Newsletter will provide Parents/Carers with the reassurance needed, knowing that we are following the Government guidance provided, however I would ask that any Parent/Carer who may be concerned, contact the school via the school office (wlboghall-ps@westlothian.org.uk). The [National Parent Forum](#) has produced guidance for Parents on the return to school.

### ***Breakfast Club***

The Breakfast Club will start up as normal on the 12th August, please email the school office on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> August if you intend to use the Breakfast Club from the 12<sup>th</sup> August.

Breakfast Club will begin at 8.15am, children should enter as normal via the dining hall door entrance.

Children will be required to register each day as normal.

Children will be required to sit in class or family groups during Breakfast Club.

### ***School day***

Children and parents/carers should be careful to respect social distancing when entering and exiting the school grounds.

### **Start of school day:**

Monday to Thursday

8.40am – 3.10pm/3.15pm

Children should continue to arrive between 8.40am and 8.50am and enter their allocated entrance.

To reduce crowds in the playground and surrounding streets, sibling groups will be dismissed at 3.10pm and all other children will be dismissed at 3.15pm.

Friday

8.40am – 12.25pm/12.30pm

Children should continue to arrive between 8.40am and 8.50am and enter their allocated entrance.

To reduce crowds in the playground and surrounding streets, sibling groups will be dismissed at 12.25pm and all other children will be dismissed at 12.30pm.

Breaks:

P1-P4 – 10.30am – 10.45am

P5-P7 – 10.45am – 11am

Lunch:

P1-P4 – 12.30pm – 1.15pm

P5-P7 – 1pm – 1.45pm

*Calendar for the first week of term*

	<b>12/8/20</b>	<b>13/8/20</b>	<b>14/8/20</b>
<b>Nursery</b>	Nursery children will attend their allocated slot as usual. Arrangement for new starts will be made with individual families.	Nursery children will attend their allocated slot as usual. Arrangement for new starts will be made with individual families.	No nursery attendance.
<b>Primary 1</b>	9am-12.30pm  Children and parent/carer should arrive at 9am and meet in the front playground and you will be met by school staff and your teacher.	8.40am – 12.30pm	8.40am – 12.30pm
<b>Primary 2, 3 and 4</b>	8.40am – 3.10/3.15pm More information regarding entrances and exits will be sent on 11 <sup>th</sup> August.	Home learning	8.40am – 12.25pm/12.30pm
<b>Primary 5, 6 and 7</b>	Home learning	8.40am – 3.10/3.15pm More information regarding entrances and exits will be sent on 11 <sup>th</sup> August.	8.40am – 12.25pm/12.30pm

### **For Home Learning please remember:**

**Primary 1-3:** We will continue to use the [school blog](#) as the main platform to share our ideas and thoughts for home learning for your child and family. Please visit regularly or follow us on [Twitter](#) @BoghallPSch to get updates directly on your mobile device. Twitter will also be used to share learning opportunities, we would love you to add and share your learning experience with us!

Additionally, to promote home learning and interaction between the children and their class teacher we will continue to use the online app Seesaw. New P1 Parents will be given more information on this in due course.

**Primary 4-7:** For children in Primary 4-7 the main platform on their home learning day to engage in learning will be Microsoft Teams. New P4 pupils will continue with the blog activities and Seesaw in the first instance until more familiar with using Teams.

### **Curriculum**

During the period of returning to school, a clear curriculum rationale is required; this will include:

- Health and wellbeing
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Further development of Outdoor Learning

We will be considering how we increase use of outdoor spaces when we reopen. Appropriate clothing will be required for particular outdoor activities and children will be informed of what they should bring to school.

### *Improvement Planning and Reporting*

Our school improvement plan will be updated to reflect the latest guidance on recovery and improvement planning. The planning for 2020-21 will focus on recovery, and then continuity of provision under these changed circumstances. There will be a continued emphasis on issues such as: supporting student and staff health and wellbeing; transitions at all levels; the impact of tragedy in communities; identifying gaps in learning; and a renewed focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

### **School transport**

Guidance on school transport has been informed by the scientific advice of the COVID-19 Advisory Sub Group on Education and Children's issues, published on 16 July.

The key messages from the scientific advice include:

- Dedicated school transport should be regarded as an extension of the school estate and it is not necessary to maintain distance between children and young people of all ages (subject to continued low levels of infection within Scotland).

- Important mitigations include: hygiene, ventilation, improved cleaning regimes including regular and thorough cleaning of surfaces, and regular handwashing. Hand sanitising should be required for everyone prior to boarding dedicated school transport and schools should also consider a process for children and young people which enables them to wash their hands immediately on arrival (as is the case for all children and young people), dispose of temporary face coverings in a covered bin or place reusable face coverings in a plastic bag they can take home with them, and then wash their hands again.
- Children, young people and adults must not board dedicated school or public transport if they, or a member of their household, have symptoms of COVID-19. If a child or young person develops symptoms while at school they will be sent home. They must not travel on regular home-to-school transport. The school should contact the parent/carer who should make appropriate and safe arrangements to collect the child or young person. In this situation, the wearing of a face covering by the child or young person on the journey home is strongly advised.

#### *Encouraging active travel*

As far as it is safe to do so, the use of active travel routes by parents/carers, staff and children and young people will be encouraged. Walking and cycling, scooting, etc should be used where possible. In view of the potential for capacity constraints on public transport to impact on children and young people's ability to attend school, all sustainable and active travel modes should be considered.

#### **Best wishes and look forward to seeing you all back!**

Mr M. Neil and the staff of Boghall Primary School and Nursery