



COVID-19 SCHOOL REOPENING NEWSLETTER

Edition 1: 29 July 2020

In addition to communicating specific details of the return from 11 August of young people to Early Years setting and schools, Scottish Borders Council will provide a regular newsletter to ensure that parents, carers and pupils are aware of the latest position, any important updates and what information is still to come.

We hope this is helpful and reassures you about how we are working to get all our young people and staff back to schools safely.

Current situation – Key Points:

- The Scottish Government has stated in its Phase 3 Route Map update “From 11 August: Children to be able to return to school full time (conditional upon scientific and health advice).” This is Scottish Borders Council’s ‘Plan A’.
- As required by the Government we have a well-developed contingency plan (‘Plan B’), which is based on blended learning – ie pupils in school some of the week and also learning from home.
- Further detailed guidance and confirmation from the Scottish Government is expected this week on school reopening arrangements.
- We intend to publish detailed information and advice for parents from Monday 3 August.

Plan A – Key Points:

- Across all settings: Young people will return from 11 August with measures in place to ensure the safety of pupils and staff and in line with Scottish Government guidance
- Early Years: As was planned for August 2020, 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare will be provided to those eligible and enrolled. Based on guidance no shared/split placements will be allowed, however this is under review by the Scottish Government
- Enhanced Provisions: In line with current national guidance no shared placements will be provided. All pupils accessing Enhanced Provisions will be in their Enhanced setting five days a week.

Communication to parents:

All communication to parents is currently being issued by the Council centrally. Closer to schools reopening individual school communication may be issued to provide you with specific arrangements relating to your school where required.

All communication is being issued through Groupcall email and is also available to view at www.scotborders.gov.uk/schoolreopening along with previous messages and FAQs.

In addition to this week’s cleaning update we plan to issue dedicated updates on school transport and catering and provide all the necessary details on all aspects of the safe return to school.

We will also issue additional newsletters to keep you updated and signpost you to other useful information, guidance and advice.



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We absolutely understand that parents, carers and pupils will have many questions right now about returning to school. The information we will send out over the coming weeks will hopefully deal with many of these queries and we will continue to update our FAQs on a regular basis. At this time, we are awaiting further detailed guidance from the Scottish Government around the reopening of schools and that is currently limiting some of the detail that we can provide you.

Please rest assured that as soon as we get this guidance we will provide updates to you as soon as we can.

If you have any concerns, queries or feedback please direct these through your respective Parent Council. The Council has established regular meetings with Parent Council Chairs to enable these concerns to be passed to the Council and addressed as required. The first of these takes place on Tuesday 4 August.

Free school meals/food vouchers

In line with the planned return of pupils from 11 August the following arrangements will end for those who have been in receipt of out-of-school food support during COVID-19.

- The vouchers issued on July 23 which cover the two weeks up to 9 August will be the last allocation
- The last frozen deliveries will be made on Thursday 6 August
- Friday 7 August will be the last day packed lunches can be picked up

Should a full return of pupils not be possible then we will reinstate arrangements to support families in need.

If you are continuing to experience any financial issues or issues accessing food please contact 0300 100 1800.

Early Learning and Childcare start dates

Due to COVID-19 there will be no early entry to Early Learning Childcare (ELC) settings in session 2020/21. This means that all 3 year old and eligible 2 year old children will start their ELC place at the designated Scottish Government funding dates: August 2020, January 2021 and April 2021.

- Children who are already three will start nursery in August 2020
- Children who turn three in September, October, November and December 2020 will start nursery in January 2021.
- Children who turn three in January and February 2021 will start in the summer term, in April 2021, after the Easter holidays.
- Children who turn three from 1 March 2021 onwards will be eligible to start their nursery place from August 2021.

See www.scotborders.gov.uk/schoolreopening for more information.



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FAQs:

Below are a small selection of FAQs that we have published online at www.scotborders.gov.uk/schoolreopening. We will continue to add to these over the coming weeks.

Q. Will there be any social distancing required in schools?

A. Based on the latest guidance and advice pupils will not be required to maintain 2m social distancing to each other, however this will be encouraged wherever practicable. There will be no assemblies or other arranged gatherings of pupils initially. Staff will be required to maintain social distancing of 2m.

Q. What precautions are being taken to ensure my child will be safe at school?

A. The Scottish Government has only confirmed that schools can reopen as the public health and scientific advice suggests it is safe to do so, with appropriate measures in place.

The precautions include:

- Significant enhanced cleaning throughout the school day
- Signage to support hand washing and hygiene requirements and encourage pupils to social distance wherever practicable
- Hand sanitising stations

There will be an ongoing reinforcement of the message that we all need to be healthy when in school and that we shouldn't be in school if unwell. Clear protocols will be in place for those feeling unwell.

Q. What are the arrangements for pupils that have been shielding?

A. The Scottish Government will 'pause' shielding from 31 July. Our plan therefore is that a full return of pupils from 11 August will include those who have been shielding. Where there is any specific health guidance for individual young people who have been shielding to stay safe we will work to accommodate any requirements in school.

Q. What arrangements will there be for bringing in school bags, pencils etc and for school uniform/PE kit?

A. We are awaiting detailed guidance from the Scottish Government this week on schools reopening. We understand that parents will have many queries and we will provide more information from Monday 3 August.

For more information see www.scotborders.gov.uk/schoolreopening