



COVID-19 SCHOOL REOPENING NEWSLETTER

Edition 2: 4 August 2020

Scottish Borders Council and our schools have developed comprehensive plans so that young people to return to school and Early Years settings on 11 August.

Effective transitions are vital for school staff and pupils when they return to ensure that our schools operate safely in what is an extraordinary situation.

In the first few days of term there will be a heavy emphasis on embedding the necessary COVID-19 safe practices for everyone in our education settings.

It is essential these are in place and operating effectively and we believe the most appropriate approach is to bring pupils back into school as the Scottish Government has instructed.

Please visit www.scotborders.gov.uk/schoolreopening for more information, FAQs and copies of previous newsletters and communications to parents.

Key points on return to school

- In line with the Scottish Government announcement on 30 July Scottish Borders Council has confirmed that all young people will return to Early Years settings and schools on 11 August
- The only exception to this is Jedburgh Grammar Campus, where normal new school transitional arrangements are in place
- The first week in all schools will be a transitional week to support pupils and staff adjust to the 'new normal' and the arrangements and routines in place
- Early Learning and Childcare - We are pleased to be able to provide 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare from many nursery age children. Ensuring the provisions for children are safe means that split placements are not being permitted unless no alternative childcare is in place. We recognise that this may mean that a small number of children will not be able to access the full 1140 hours whilst COVID-19 restrictions are in place.
- Primary schools – Full return of pupils on 11 August – normal school days and hours. Schools will support new P1 transition which may include a late start on the first day.
- Secondary schools – Full return of pupils on 11 August – normal school days and hours. Support will be in place for new S1 throughout the first week to provide a smooth transition.
- Enhanced Provisions – There will be no shared placements for pupils accessing Enhanced Provisions so all will attend their Enhanced setting five days a week initially. Parents/carers will receive direct communication regarding individual arrangements.

Social distancing

The following information on social distancing is taken from Scottish Government guidance.

Early Learning and Childcare

It is not appropriate for young children to maintain physical distancing, either practically or in terms of child development. In addition, it is not desirable or possible to implement physical distancing between young children or between a young child and their key worker.



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Schools

Two metres physical distancing should be maintained between adults and adults, and adults and children/young people who are not from the same household, wherever possible.

There is no requirement for physical distancing between children and young people of any age in schools.

As a precautionary approach, secondary schools should encourage distancing where possible between young people, particularly in the senior phase. This does not have to be strict adherence to 2m physical distancing.

Returning to School – Wellbeing information and advice

COVID-19 has had a significant impact on all of our day to day lives and it is not possible to know or fully understand how the ongoing situation might impact on mental health and wellbeing. The following information will help us work together to support all young people to return to school successfully.

Planning to go back to school

Many of us will be worried about young people returning to school in August. If you or your child have any concerns it is best to let the school know as soon as possible. Try to provide as much detail as you can. Do this in a way you feel comfortable. For example:

- Telephone or email the school
- Write a letter/encourage your child to draw a picture
- Make a video

The more information we have the easier it will be to support everyone to feel more confident about the return to school.

Remember a lot of people will be feeling uncertain and this is understandable. We are working hard to continue to support all young people and their families.

It is important to emphasise that we are following the Scottish Government guidance on the safe reopening of schools and that we will continue to provide more information to you between now and 11 August.

Going back to school

We look forward to welcoming all young people back to school in August. We are curious about how young people and their families have experienced the period of lockdown and are supporting staff to explore this with all pupils on their return.

Remember, the most important thing young people bring to school is themselves! Please let the school know if you are finding it difficult to provide uniform or equipment for your child because help is available.



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Focus on wellbeing

It is important to focus on emotional wellbeing so that young people are more able to return to learning effectively in school.

The first week back will be a transitional week for all pupils and staff, to help everyone adjust to the 'new normal' and the arrangements and routines that will be in place. Extra support will be available to the new P1 and S1 intakes, and there is always support available to any pupil if required.

Young people will also have had different experiences of learning at home and some will be more ready for a return to school than others.

It is important not to get caught up with ideas of 'catching up' or 'missed' learning.

Schools will continue to identify where all young people are in their learning and plan their progress from there.

When more help is needed

We recognise that some young people may need a bit more support at this time.

If you are concerned about your child please discuss this first with a member of school staff.

Our Educational Psychology Service has also provided some useful information throughout the lockdown period to help young people and their parents and carers. You can find this at www.scotborders.gov.uk/EPS

Further support and information can also be found on the Parent Club website - www.parentclub.scot and from our partners Quarriers - www.quarriers.org.uk/services/borders-resilience-for-wellbeing

Concerns/queries/feedback

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 took place on Tuesday 4 August.

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