



COVID-19 SCHOOL REOPENING NEWSLETTER

Edition 5: 10 September 2020

Schools are still very settled and we have all been impressed by our young people's adaptability, especially in secondary schools where they have of course all been asked to wear face coverings outwith classes.

The following newsletter provides further updates on various matters and some key reminders.

We continue to engage with Parent Council representatives on a weekly basis and would encourage you to keep providing your feedback to your Parent Council.

Plan B – Blended Learning

Following the reopening of schools we have been working with all our Headteachers to finalise contingency plans for blended learning in case they should be required at any time.

Although we had very well developed plans prior to schools reopening, in case the Scottish Government decided on a blended learning reopening of schools, these were based on employing significant additional resources to maximise attendance across all our schools.

Now schools have reopened fully it would not be financially sustainable for us to employ these additional resources on the off-chance that a blended learning model needs to be implemented.

As a result we have been reviewing and refining the plans based on the resources available to us currently. We continue to aim to maximise attendance and make full use of the Inspire Learning programme, which will shortly be available for all pupils from P4 upwards.

We hope we will never need our blended learning plans, but recognise that parents need to know the detail. As soon as we can we will share the full details, including the days on which pupils will attend school. As previously communicated however, all schools would be closed on Fridays and as a minimum all pupils would attend school at least two days a week.

Practical classes/extra-curricular activities

National guidelines across a range of areas in respect of practical subjects and extra-curricular activities continue to be developed and released and we are implementing these wherever we can.

A number of sporting national bodies have issued guidance on activities restarting. Often these only relate to clubs rather than school sporting activities however. Principal Teachers across all our Physical Education departments are therefore working on plans for extra-curricular sport to restart, but we have to be mindful about cross-school sport fixtures and activities.

Further updates will be provided when possible.

Face covering exemptions

Some individuals are exempt from wearing face coverings. The full list of exemptions can be found in the [Scottish Government guidance](#).



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2020/21 School year

In light of the reopening of schools in August one week earlier than planned, as directed by the Scottish Government the current school year will end one week earlier. The last day of the school year will therefore be Wednesday 23 June 2021, not Wednesday 30 June 2021 as originally published.

Flu vaccination programme

Following a delay due to COVID-19, the usual flu vaccination programme for primary school pupils will commence on 21 September.

Work continues to reschedule other vaccination programmes in our schools.

Common cold and COVID-19 symptoms and advice

Unsurprisingly the return of young people to nurseries and schools has resulted in an increase in the number of cold and flu-like illnesses. This is entirely normal, especially since young people have largely been apart for almost five months.

You should deal with these illnesses as you would normally, keeping young people off school/nursery if necessary, depending on their symptoms and the effect of them, and allowing them to return once the symptoms have passed.

We understand that parents will be especially concerned at this time, especially in light of there being a COVID-19 outbreak within the Scottish Borders.

You must remain vigilant for the COVID-19 symptoms, but it is essential that only people with COVID-19 symptoms seek tests.

COVID-19 Symptoms

The symptoms of COVID-19 are a new persistent cough, temperature/fever (37.8C or higher) and/or loss or change in ability to taste or smell.

A new continuous cough is where you:

- have a new cough that's lasted for an hour
- have had 3 or more episodes of coughing in 24 hours
- are coughing more than usual

A high temperature is feeling hot to the touch on your chest or back (you don't need to measure your temperature). You may feel warm, cold or shivery.

Other cold or flu symptoms, such as a runny nose, are not COVID-19 symptoms.



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Self-isolating

Anyone with any one of the symptoms of COVID-19 must self-isolate for 10 days. Anyone who lives in the same household must also isolate, but for 14 days. Only people who are showing symptoms should seek a COVID-19 test.

If other household members develop symptoms within the 14 days, they need to stay at home for 10 days from the day their symptoms started and arrange to be tested. They should do this even if it takes them over the 14-day isolation period.

The only other people who need to self-isolate are those people who have been instructed to do so by NHS Contact Tracers as they have been identified as a 'close contact' of someone with COVID-19. In these circumstances only they need to self-isolate. This will be for a full 14 days, even if they get a negative test. Other household members do not need to self-isolate.

Testing

It is essential that only people who have COVID-19 symptoms or who are instructed by the NHS to be tested seek a test.

Anyone not showing symptoms should not seek a test as this takes away the opportunity for those with symptoms to be tested. Tests must be booked in advance.

You can arrange your test by visiting www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test or calling 0800 028 2816.

If your child has symptoms but tests negative they can return to school once they have had no fever for 48 hours and are feeling better. You must inform the school immediately about their absence and when their test results are received.

How to minimise chances of catching COVID-19

By following some very simple steps you can greatly reduce the chances of you catching COVID-19.

Remember the FACTS that will help all of us to stay safe and protect each other as well:

- Face coverings in enclosed spaces
- Avoid crowded places
- Clean hands and surfaces regularly
- Two metre distancing; and
- Self-isolate and book a test if you have symptoms.

There are other things that you, as parents and carers, can also do to help keep our schools COVID-free:

Dropping off or picking up children

- Please stay 2 metres away from other families/households. Close contact and large groups help spread coronavirus and could lead to an outbreak in school.
- To help stop crowding at the school gates, only one adult per family/household should be dropping off or picking up children.
- If your child can walk safely to and from school without an adult, or be dropped off and met at a safe distance from school, please let them. This will make physical distancing easier for those who have to accompany their child.



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Talk with your child or young person about coronavirus

- Please talk to your child about regular hand washing, covering their coughs and sneezes, and physical distancing (for older young people, and adults). See [NHS Inform](#) for a reminder of how to keep yourself and your family safe.
- When not in school, children and young people should wear face coverings when they are in enclosed public places.
- Face coverings should (unless exemptions apply) be worn in secondary schools, by adults and all pupils moving around the school, such as in corridors and communal areas where physical distancing is difficult to maintain. They do not need to be worn in classes. Face covering should also be worn on dedicated school transport by all children aged five and over.

Stay safe at home

- House parties have been linked to outbreaks across Scotland. As a result we would strongly discourage you from holding parties at this time, or if you do decide to hold one ensure that the number of people attending is within the national guidance and that social distancing is maintained between adults and older children at all times.
- Clean hands and surfaces regularly
- Social distance from any visitors

Returning from holiday

- If you return from an area with quarantine restrictions keep your child off school and stay at home for 14 days. In this case, a negative COVID test will not shorten quarantine as it doesn't show if you or your child will develop the virus. Updated travel information is on the [Scottish Government website](#).