

Dear Parent/Carer

Following the full return of young people to schools and Early Years facilities in mid-August it has been essential for us to finalise contingency arrangements in case they are required at any point in the future.

Our Plan B – Blended Learning plans are now complete, following revisions which reflect the position having made a full return.

By the end of tomorrow individual school communications will be sent to confirm exactly which days your children/young people would attend in the event of Plan B being implemented.

It is crucial to emphasise that the exact circumstances which would necessitate the implementation of Plan B in a single school, a school cluster, or across the whole Scottish Borders are not known. The plans have however been developed based on a requirement for social distancing between pupils which would significantly reduce capacity in our schools.

Were a 'local lockdown' to be imposed it also cannot be assumed that these contingency arrangements will be required, as it will all depend on the extent or type of restrictions imposed.

The focus in developing these contingency plans has been to ensure that learning provision, both in-school and at home, meets the needs of every pupil and that they are supported individually in a way that helps them to achieve their learning targets and prepare them for the future.

Our absolute priority continues to be the safety of pupils and staff.

Blended Learning

In our blended learning contingency plans our Early Years facilities and schools, with the exception of Enhanced Provisions, will be open Monday to Thursday only. This maximises the available teaching time for pupils as all the contracted non-teaching time for teaching staff will be taken on Fridays.

All young people will be in school or Early Years settings at least two days a week, and will learn from home the rest of the week.

Wherever possible, pupils will be in school more than this, and many primary school pupils will be in all four days. However, this is only possible where the pupil roll, physical capacity of buildings and staffing capacity is able to accommodate this.

We have taken every opportunity to maximise the attendance capacity, including use of what was previously non-teaching spaces. We will not be using non-school space however, such as village halls etc, as the work required to make these high quality learning spaces for temporary use is prohibitive.

Where pupils from a family are split between primary and secondary schools we have worked to ensure that wherever possible they attend on the same days to minimise childcare arrangements for parents and carers.

Overarching arrangements

Secondary schools:

- Open Monday to Thursday
- Every pupil in school two days a week (41% of normal time [11.25 hours of normal 27.5 hours/week])

- In-school time focussed on face-to-face teaching, with the balance of learning time at home, supported by the Inspire Learning programme
- All teacher non-contact time compressed to Friday

Primary schools:

- Open Monday to Thursday
- Full week of learning provided via blended learning approach of in-school and home learning
- Due to the focus on maximising teaching time and the limited capacity of some schools the following arrangements will be in place:
 - All children in P1-P7 attend Mon-Thur (27 schools)
 - All children in P1-P7 attend two days per week (5 schools)
 - As many children as possible, prioritising younger pupils, attend Mon-Thur (NB. Age group attending four days varies school to school) (27 schools)
 - A breakdown of these schools is attached
- P4-P7 pupils' learning will be supported by the Inspire Learning programme, with all year groups provided with age appropriate, high quality and supported home-learning activities which support and reinforce in-school learning. (P6-P7 have all received iPads. P4 and P5 rollout is about to commence)
- All teacher non-contact time compressed to Friday

Enhanced Provisions:

- Open Monday to Friday as normal
- No shared placements between Enhanced Provisions and catchment schools
- Staff equipped with PPE as required

Early Years/Early Learning and Childcare

- With any social distancing requirement SBC Early Years facilities are not be able to provide the full 1140 hours entitlement
- Weekly hours would therefore be provided in line with the existing 600 hours statutory requirement.
- Private providers are equally restricted, but where any additional capacity is available they will be able to provide additional paid-for hours to parents

Childcare Hubs

Should contingency arrangements be implemented we will operate critical childcare hubs five days a week for vulnerable children and those children of key workers where no alternative childcare provision is available.

The exact arrangements will depend on the individual circumstances requiring the contingency arrangements to be put in place.

School meals

We recognise how important schools meals are to many parents and children. Should our contingency arrangements be implemented we will provide e-vouchers for those families whose household income has been assessed and an award made in respect of Free School Meals and does not include the universal provision in nursery and P1-3. Anyone else in need of support will also be able to apply for help to feed their children when they are not in school.

FAQs

A series of FAQs have been prepared regarding the Plan B arrangements. These can be found [on our website.](#)

Communication

Should contingency arrangements be required at any time we will of course ensure that parents and carers are fully informed of the arrangements and that all necessary support is in place.

Regards

Rob Dickson
Executive Director
Scottish Borders Council