



13 August 2021

Dear Parent and Carers

I hope that you have had a good break and enjoyed the lovely summer weather. I am delighted to welcome our children and young people back to our Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings and schools on Wednesday, 18 August.

From the 9 August we have moved to beyond level 0 and this allows the removal of many of the restrictions that we have all been living with in society.

Updated guidance has been prepared for schools and is available via this link –

[Scottish Government Guidance for Schools](#) .

In considering arrangements for schools from August, this guidance has drawn on expert advice from the Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues. In developing that advice, the Advisory Sub-Group took account of relevant evidence and the potential impact of proposed mitigations in schools. In reaching their conclusions, they specifically considered Long Covid, the impact on staff safety and wellbeing, the wider impact on children and families and the potential for disrupted learning in future.

It has been agreed that many of the Covid-19 mitigations and safety measures in place at the end of term in June will remain in place for a period of at least six weeks. This is to enable monitoring of the impact of the return to school on Covid-19 case numbers.

Mitigations remaining in place will include:

- Physical distancing of at least one metre between all staff, and between staff and pupils.
- Face coverings to be worn by all staff and young people aged 12 and over.
- Enhanced cleaning, ventilation and hygiene measures.
- Drop off and pick up arrangements that request parents/carers to
 - Avoid gathering at school gates.
 - Wear a face covering where required.
 - Maintain physical distancing.

There are changes to some measures to be implemented as soon as possible which include:

- Removing the requirement to maintain groups or 'bubbles' in ELC and schools.
- On dedicated school transport only adults and young people aged 12 and over should wear a face covering.
- Changes to the arrangements for self-isolation and contact tracing.

Our ELC settings and schools will be working to update their risk assessments and other documents to reflect the latest guidance and will keep you updated through the usual channels.

For your information, I have attached a letter from the Director of Public Health which gives clear advice on what families need to do if their child tests positive or their child is identified as having prolonged contact with someone who's tested positive for the virus. This includes a link to the location of testing centres where you will be able to get a PCR test for your child if they are contacted as a very close contact. A negative PCR test will allow your child to return to school without the need for the 10-day self-isolation. One of the major changes is that our ELC settings and schools will no longer be involved in contact tracing and this will all be done via Test and Protect.

Primary 1

In line with the published guidance, parents/carers of children starting in Primary 1 will generally **not** be able to access the school building or grounds on the first day of term. For a limited number of children who require additional support, alternative arrangements may be possible. Please contact your school directly to discuss with the Head Teacher.

Testing Programme

Staff in all settings, and young people attending secondary school are being asked to consider taking a lateral flow test prior to returning to school. Where possible, we're recommending that this should be completed either the evening before or the morning of the return to school.

Lateral flow home test kits are available to anyone who does not have COVID-19 symptoms. They can be [ordered online](#) and delivered through the post. Test kits can also be collected from test sites, or from [community pharmacies](#).

Once term resumes, test kits for young people will be available direct from school.

Vaccinations

Certain groups of young people aged 12-17 will be offered the Covid-19 vaccination from August 2021. The key groups are:

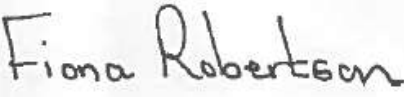
- All young people aged 16-17.
- Young people aged 12-17 with certain conditions.
- Young people aged 12-17 who are household contacts of other adults and children who are vulnerable.

If your child is included in any of these groups you will be contacted directly by NHS Lothian with further details.

Finally, this has been an extremely challenging year and I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and your family for your resilience and support during this period.

We are all looking forward to a more positive year ahead and the real possibility of you being able to join us physically at school and learner events.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Robertson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'F' and 'R'. The background is a light grey rectangular area.

Fiona Robertson
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