

Parents and Carers

Date

12 June 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

I wanted to write to you to provide an update on our plans to reopen our schools in August.

This continues to be a challenging time for us all and I want to thank you once again for your patience and understanding. I also want to assure you that we're working extremely hard to put arrangements in place that will ensure the safest return to schools for our pupils and staff.

Following the Scottish Government's announcement that schools should open a week earlier next session, we've made some minor adjustments to our session dates for 2020/2021. As such, our schools will reopen to pupils from Wednesday 12 August. (The two preceding days will be used as in-service days for staff.)

As schools will start the session one week earlier than originally published, the summer holidays in 2021 will consequently begin one week earlier, with the session finishing on Friday 25 June 2021.

The Scottish Government has advised that this month should be used as preparation for reopening schools in August and part of this will involve some children being invited into school for special transition experiences. Those children who require this support will be contacted by their school and appointments will be made with families to attend during June. In the meantime, work continues with home learning. I want to repeat my thanks to parents, carers and staff in our schools who continue to support our children with home learning and keyworker learning and childcare.

The past three months have presented enormous challenges for families across the city and I am grateful for your patience and support. To our children and young people, I want to reassure you that every effort is being made to minimise the disruption to your learning.

Communities and Families Directorate

Level 2.6 Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh EH8 8BG

Tel 0131 469 3001 Email Alistair.gaw@edinburgh.gov.uk

The new blended model of learning represents an improvement on the current home learning arrangements and, though far from ideal, we will review, refine and improve the arrangements as conditions allow.

In accordance with Scottish Government advice and consistent with Health Protection Scotland guidance, social distancing, hygiene regimes and risk assessments will be essential to keep our children and staff safe. This will mean that not all children will be able to return to school at the same time. We need to be mindful of social distancing, staff availability and circulation routes as well as hygiene and infection control arrangements. Rotas will be arranged to ensure that all children and young people receive a blended model of in-home and in-school learning. Your school's Headteacher will be in contact with you before 24 June to inform you which days your child will be in school.

Across the city, in-school learning will take place from Mondays to Thursdays. Fridays will be used by staff to support home learning and limited Key Worker childcare support will continue throughout the week, including Fridays, during normal school hours at each child's school. All children will attend for whole days.

To enable social distancing, from the start of the session it is anticipated that 33% of a school's roll will be engaged in in-school learning and when and, where conditions allow, arrangements will be made to maximise the proportion of in-school learning.

In Early Learning and Primary Schools, children will be grouped together to enable family members to attend school on the same full day. In Secondary Schools, pupils will be grouped together either by year group or family group depending on the individual arrangements made by each secondary school and each child in the rota will attend for a full day.

There will be a city-wide approach to catering and building opening, with the details of the arrangements at each school reflecting local circumstances and Headteachers will be in contact with parents with details before the end of the session.

Please be assured that we are working to make sure schools are ready for your children to return in August and that while learning and teaching is crucially important, the health and safety of children, young people and adults in schools is paramount and will be at the heart of all we do.

Yours sincerely



Alistair Gaw

Executive Director for Communities and Families