



EDUCATION, COMMUNITIES & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Dear Parents/Carers

I wrote to you on 15 June regarding our plans for recovery where each Head Teacher was developing their plans for pupils to return in August following social distancing guidance and a blended learning approach.

First of all I thank you all again for your patience, support and understanding as we navigate through another period of change for our country. Your support for your children and their learning has been tremendous and I know I speak on behalf of all school staff, in appreciating your efforts as you have managed to juggle your own challenges at this time.

The Deputy First Minister, Mr John Swinney, announced yesterday (23 June) that if spread of the virus continues to be suppressed and that the data and scientific evidence supports it, our schools will welcome children and young people back full-time on 12 August, an earlier than planned start to session 2020/21. None of us would wish children to be away from school for any additional period of time, however we must be assured that it is safe for them and our staff to return.

Schools have, as I said, been busy shaping up recovery plans and these will continue to be finalised as a contingency for August. Head Teachers will share these plans with you. As previously mentioned there is not a consistent approach across Moray, however Head Teachers and Senior Leaders have worked hard in developing plans given the constraints they face, may this be staffing buildings, transport or other factors. We will continue to strive to get as many children back as frequently as possible should we have to instigate the contingencies. In line with this is our planning for blended learning which will also be put in place should children and young people not return full-time in August. Your patience and continued understanding is appreciated given the massive logistical nature of the planning process.

As we await further national guidance in light of Mr Swinney's announcement, we will continue to develop Risk Assessments as well as health and safety measures to reduce the risk of any further spread of the virus. This will include regular hand washing, hand sanitisation, additional cleaning and the removal of any resources which are unnecessary.

The final week of term next week will be particularly busy for staff as they implement further changes to school buildings and classrooms. Many schools will set challenges, at the beginning of next week to round off our current period of remote learning and I respectfully seek your support again to school staff as they juggle a number of priorities including setting up schools in a different way to which was first planned.

I will continue to update you as necessary over the summer holiday period, where guidance or circumstances change. Please look out on our Moray Council website, Twitter and Facebook sites for information.

It is vitally important that we all continue to follow national guidance in order that our children can return to school full-time in August and to prevent any further disruption to their education and learning. Sincere thanks once again to you all and please enjoy the summer break as we progress through the Scottish Government's recovery phases. Please stay safe and well.

Regards

Vivienne Cross