



Director of Children's Services: Helen Budge

Children's Services

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All Parents and Carers

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Our Ref: HB/RC/kk/S40-37/corr/21/005
Your Ref:

Date: 07 April 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

COVID-19 and Implications for Schools and Early Learning and Childcare Settings.

Following the full-time return of children, attending early learning and childcare and primary one to three on Tuesday 23 February 2021, and then primary four to seven children on Monday 15 March 2021, I write to inform you that the First Minister confirmed yesterday there will also be a full-time return for secondary aged children and young people after the Easter Holidays.

For Shetland Islands Council, the First Minister's announcement means a full-time return to face-to-face learning from the first day of the new school term for all children and young people, Monday 12 April 2021.

The First Minister also made reference to children who are on the shielding list in her announcement yesterday. Please be reassured Shetland Islands Council is a Level 3 Local Authority, within the Scottish Government's Strategic Framework five-level protection system to manage the spread of coronavirus. Children and young people, who are clinically vulnerable, and have been shielding, are able to return to school and early learning and childcare settings after the Easter holidays, providing individual risk assessments and the appropriate mitigations are in place for them.

Moreover, as per the First Minister's announcement, the strict two metre physical distancing requirement between secondary aged pupils in schools, in place when secondary aged children made a part-time return two weeks prior to the Easter holidays, will be relaxed to accommodate the full-time return, although secondary settings should encourage physical distancing between pupils wherever practicable.

In addition, in secondary settings, two metre physical distancing will continue between staff and between staff and pupils. Physical distancing requirements in primary schools remain unchanged, e.g. two metre distancing between adults not from the same household should be maintained. There should also be two metre distancing between adults and pupils whenever possible.

Please also note that in secondary settings, face coverings should continue to be worn at all times by staff and all pupils in classrooms, in communal areas and when moving about the school.

Following the First Minister's announcement yesterday and the publication of national guidance on reducing the risks of Coronavirus in schools, Children's Services will update its local health and safety guidance to support the safety of all children, young people and staff working in schools and early learning and childcare settings.

As well as the physical distancing requirements and the use of face coverings, a range of other mitigations and control measures are already in place to ensure schools and early learning and childcare settings are COVID-19 secure, including:

- hand sanitisers and virucidal wipes;
- daily hand sanitisation for all children and young people on arrival at their school or early learning and childcare setting;
- one way systems throughout settings;
- enhanced daily cleaning cleaned throughout the day and further cleaning undertaken daily at the end of each day;
- careful monitoring to ensure the appropriate level of ventilation and adequate air flow throughout school and early learning and childcare buildings with CO2 monitors deployed, monitoring the level of CO2, and temperature in classrooms; and
- asymptomatic, lateral flow, testing kits twice a week for all school and early learning and childcare staff and all secondary aged children.

With regard to the asymptomatic lateral flow tests for secondary pupils, your child's secondary school will have already shared information with you and I would strongly advise that your child takes up this opportunity of twice weekly lateral flow testing.

As we move into the new school term, please continue to be vigilant to the symptoms of COVID-19 within your family household:

- A high temperature of fever
- A new continuous cough
- A loss of, or change in sense of smell or taste

In the event anyone in your family developing any of these symptoms, you should immediately self-refer for a coronavirus test by completing an online form on the NHS Inform website. This form is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, and will be picked up by the testing team as soon as possible. If you are unable to access the online form, you can contact a dedicated phone line 01595 532 030 between 9 -12.30 and 2-5pm Monday to Friday. You should self-isolate until you have the test results. If you, or a family household member, have been in direct contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus, Public Health/Contact Tracing will contact you to advise you to self-isolate.

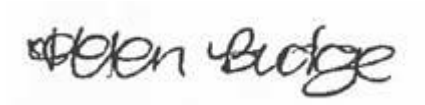
In the event of a confirmed case (s) of COVID-19 connected to a school or early learning and childcare setting, Officers in Children's Services, the school's Head Teacher and colleagues in Public Health will work closely to assess the situation and clarify next-steps, communicating regularly with all the setting's parents and carers.

Please be reassured that the safety of your child, and health and wellbeing more generally, will continue to be paramount to Children's Services' planning.

Parents/carers who have any concerns about their child returning should discuss with the school's Head Teacher or another promoted member of staff within the school.

Thank you for your continued support and I wish your child all the very best with the full-time face-to-face learning next term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Budge". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small circular mark at the beginning of the first word.

Helen Budge
Director of Children's Services