

Please ask for: Nicky Grant
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Date: 25 June 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

On Tuesday 23 June, the Deputy First Minister announced to the Scottish Parliament that the Scottish Government is now planning for the full return of children and young people to schools in August, subject to ongoing COVID-19 scientific and health advice.

Following our letter to you dated 8 June, you will be aware that teachers, early years practitioners and other staff have been returning to schools in small groups since the start of the month, to plan and prepare for the re-opening of schools and early learning and childcare (ELC) settings in compliance with current Scottish Government guidance.

While we are now working towards a return to full-time schooling, we have also put in place, as required by the Scottish Government, contingency plans for a blended learning model, with pupils attending school and ELC on some days and learning at home on others.

Each school is sharing their plans for return to school arrangements with their families – this is essential work as part of our contingency plans.

The risk assessments and health and safety measures for all of our schools will remain focussed on the key elements that will help us all reduce the risk of the spread of the virus. This will include regular hand washing, additional cleaning of the school building and observing the current government guidance for schools and nurseries.

We hope these contingency plans do not need to be put into practice, but it is important you are aware of these arrangements and know we are prepared for all eventualities in these uncertain times.

We can now confirm that we are planning for schools to re-open for pupils on Wednesday 12 August, with the preceding day (11 August) allocated as an in-service day for staff.

As we come towards the end of the academic session, we want to recognise the wonderful achievements and commitment to learning of the Highland Council children and young

people during this period. As we emerge from this difficult time, we are looking forward to welcoming all children and young people back to our schools and ELC settings ensuring they continue to receive the highest quality of care and learning.

We are fully aware this has been a tough and uncertain time for families throughout the Highland Council area and we thank you again, as parents and carers, for your incredible support, understanding and resilience.

We also want to recognise the massive efforts and commitment of our teams in schools and ELC settings, as well as our central teams, who have worked tirelessly during this period of time to ensure that our children and young people have been offered a range of learning experiences, as well as preparing our schools and nurseries for return in August.

This remains a fast-moving and challenging situation and the Council, along with our schools and ELC settings, recognise the importance of keeping you regularly updated.

Thank you once again for your support during these difficult and challenging few months and hope you have a lovely summer break.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicky Grant', followed by a period.

Nicky Grant
Head of Education

