

**NEWTONGRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**EDUCATION DIVISION**

Head Teacher  
Miss V Morgan

**Midlothian**

Our Ref:

Monday 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Return to School – 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

I hope that you and your family are well and you have managed to have some fun over the summer with family and friends.

On 30<sup>th</sup> July, the Scottish Government confirmed the decision to re-open schools full time in August 2020. This is due to the progress being made to suppress the virus and is dependent on this trend continuing. This will be welcome news for many and I want to once again thank you for your continued patience and support - it is greatly appreciated as we have tried to plan for our learners and staff returning to school safely.

Last week, Mrs Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships, issued a letter outlining the local authority's model of recovery for schools which explained the managed re-opening of schools between Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> and Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2020, with all children back at school full-time on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

I understand fully that as parents and carers you may be anxious about your child's return to school or ELC (Early Learning and Childcare) Setting as we are all trying to come to terms with the impact of the pandemic which has challenged the way we now live our lives. Please be reassured that the safety of our learners and staff is paramount in all of our decision-making and follows the advice that we have received from both the Scottish Government and Midlothian Council.

Schools across Midlothian Council have worked together to try to ensure consistency in approach, although please be mindful that there may be a few differences to suit the context of each individual establishment.

To ensure that we comply with the guidance on social distancing and good hygiene, the following arrangements are in place at Newtongrange Primary School and ELC Setting.

**Patterns of Attendance for the Managed Return to School P1-P7**

- **All P2 – P7 learners** will attend school full time from Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020.
- **P1 learners** will have a phased start into school and will attend school on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August – Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August from 9:15am – 12:00 noon.
- **P1 learners** will attend school full time from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

**ELC setting arrangements for the managed return to school**

Initially we will be offering 600hrs sessions as communicated with you before the summer holiday. Your child will return to our ELC setting on the date already provided to you and transition activities will be shared via Seesaw from the 12<sup>th</sup> August. We are pleased to advise that our ELC setting will move to implement the delivery of 1140 hours expansion for 3 and 4 year olds as soon as we practically can. Further information will be sent out to all families with children in our ELC settings in due course.

*These models follow the guidance issued by Midlothian Council.*

**Arrangements for dropping off and collecting your child**

The arrangements for Parents and Carers to drop off and collect children requires careful consideration, to ensure that large gatherings of people are avoided and physical distancing between adults and children of different groupings is maintained. In order to effectively achieve this, we will have staggered starts and ends of the day. This will allow us to carefully manage the movement of learners around the school site.

Please support us to maintain Social Distancing by arriving at the school gate as close to the drop off time as possible. If your child arrives late at school, please bring them to the school office, where a member of staff will welcome them into school.

- We request **that only one** parent or carer brings their child to school. Older children may walk to school on their own.
- Staff will be in the playground to welcome children and direct them to their lines and entry points.
- To ensure Social Distancing is maintained, Parents and Carers are asked not to stop to talk to others in the playground or congregate around the school gates.
- During wet weather we do not have the capacity to allow children to enter school before the required drop off time.
- During Covid-19 restrictions we cannot permit parents and carers into school unless in exceptional circumstances.

There will be a one-way system in place for those parents and carers who drop off and collect their child at the start and end of day. Staff will be on hand to support you to collect your child and leave the school premises safely.

Families are advised to take a direct route between home and school, avoiding going to the shops. If they do go into shops they must adhere to guidance and wear face masks.

The table below details the staggered start and end times for the different groups.

<b>Staggered start and end times</b>	
<b>Start time 8:45am – End time 2:55pm</b>	<b>Start time 9:00am – End time 3:10pm</b>
P1a (from 17 <sup>th</sup> August)	P1b (from 17 <sup>th</sup> August)
P2	P1/2 (from 17 <sup>th</sup> August for P1 learners)
P2/3	P3/4
P3	P4
P4/5	P6a
P5	P6b
P7a	P7b

We have also staggered the daily routine to limit the likelihood of groups overlapping at transition points, including break and lunch times.

### **Lunches**

**All children must bring daily, a packed lunch to school and our ELC setting, until Friday 18 September 2020,** following which there will be further guidance issued. BACs payments will continue until this time for those entitled to free school meals. Children will eat their lunch in their classrooms or our ELC setting to avoid mass gatherings of children in line with national guidance. Cleaning procedures will be implemented at lunch times.

### **School Uniform**

Where possible, we continue to encourage all children to wear school uniform, however during this time there is a relaxed attitude to dress code. School uniform/clothing should be washed/cleaned as normal. School uniform can continue to be ordered through our school office. We also have a supply of quality second hand school uniform available for free to families. Please contact Lee Grieve, our HSP to check our uniform bank.

At this time PE changing rooms remain closed and children will not be encouraged to change for PE. We advise that on days children have PE they come to school dressed in sportswear. We will communicate with you what day your child's class has PE in due course.

### **Safety measures to support return**

A return to full time learning is what we have always been striving for as we do not want our children to be away from their classrooms and ELC settings for any longer than necessary. I want to reassure you that our priority is to ensure the return is safe and we continue to follow all advice and guidance, where health and safety sits at the heart of our plans, with risk assessments and infection prevention and control measures in place.

Midlothian Council has a strict protocol in place for the reporting of suspected COVID cases, and the procedures to be followed by schools. Parents and carers must **NOT** send their child to school if they display any of the common symptoms:

- New continuous cough
- Fever/ high temperature
- Loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia)

If a child displaying any of these symptoms is sent to school or becomes unwell during the school day, we will contact you and ask that you to make arrangements to have your child collected immediately.

Further guidance on this can be found on the NHS Inform website: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>

Enhanced cleaning routines will be implemented using products which are effective against bacteria and viruses and there will be clear signage throughout school buildings to reinforce the infection prevention and control measures in place. Hand sanitisers will be at the entrances and in all appropriate areas across our school to enable learners and staff to hand sanitise regularly.

The national guidance highlights, that *we do not expect the return to school in August to be a return to normality*. Given that our children have not been in school since March, it is important that they have the opportunity to become familiar with our new layouts in our school, our hygiene practice of washing or sanitising their hands, arrangements for entering and exiting, lunch and interval breaks and new routines.

### **Face Masks, Face Coverings and PPE**

Midlothian Council policy is for all school staff to wear face visors as enhanced protection. Some staff may wear face masks to support any children and young people who are working in close proximity to learners or choose to do so for personal reasons. In certain circumstances, staff may wear enhanced PPE as required when working in specific environments.

Your support in explaining to your child the need for changes to the way our school operates would be appreciated. Our children have shown incredible resilience and patience throughout the last three months and I want to do everything possible to reassure them that our school and ELC setting is doing everything possible to welcome them back and keep them safe.

### **Recovery Curriculum**

Everyone will have been aware of, or have been affected by the global Covid-19 pandemic in some way. As a response to the Covid-19 Pandemic our curriculum delivery has been temporarily reshaped to ensure the safety and recovery of our whole school community. It is vital that we focus on individuals' wellbeing and mental health in light of real or perceived trauma that may have been caused by recent events.

We have been thinking about what the curriculum will be like for each and every one of our learners, at whatever age, stage or ability level on the day they walk through the school door. We recognise that learners will not simply pick up the curriculum at exactly the same point at which they left it on their last day at school. Too much has happened.

Our Recovery Curriculum will:

- Supporting our children to build positive relationships with others.
- Supporting our children to manage their feelings and behaviours.
- Supporting our children to enjoy school and make excellent progress.
- Supporting our children's physical health and well-being.
- Supporting our children to understand the Covid-19 situation and how it has affected them and others.

I also want to reassure you that our blended learning model is ready and in place if the national advice required this.

Please find attached a Parent Guide detailing key regarding the return to school including a map of our one way entry and exit system and classroom layout. We will share with you shortly our full Recovery Curriculum and Operational Guidance.

As you can imagine, planning for the safe reopening of school has been challenging and there may be some things that don't flow as well as hoped. I ask that you continue to remain patient and support us, as we work through this new way of schooling. Hopefully, these changes will only be of a temporary nature and that we will be able to reintroduce and enjoy all that our school has to offer in the near future.

Finally, I would again take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for all you have done to support your child's learning during this crisis. I understand how challenging it is to juggle home and working commitments. I am also very grateful to all our staff who have done an incredible job in extremely challenging circumstances.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming children back into our school and ELC setting on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> August.

Take care and stay safe.

Kind regards

Vicky Morgan  
Head Teacher

