

NEWTONGRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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EDUCATION DIVISION

Head Teacher
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Midlothian



Our Ref:



8th March 2021

Dear and Parents

Return to School for P4-P7 Monday 15th March 2021

Many thanks for your continued cooperation and support during which has been a very challenging time for us all. The long awaited news has arrived that P4-P7 children can return to school on Monday 15th March. All the staff at Newtongrange Primary School are very much looking forward to welcoming your children back to school. We are delighted to have our whole school community together again!

I understand fully that as parents and carers you may be anxious about your child's return to school 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. I would be very grateful if you could spend some time reading the following information to ensure you all support us appropriately and keep safe too. As you will read, many of the arrangements are the same as before Christmas, but there are also some new arrangements being put in place.

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 continue to have staggered starts and ends of the day. This will allow us to carefully manage the movement of learners around the school site.

- **Arrive at school as close to your child's start time/ pick up time**, spending as little time in the playground as possible and avoid gathering with other households. The school gates will open 5 minutes before children are due in school.
- Please follow the one-way system.
- **Only one parent or carer** brings their child to school.
- Please **keep playground access points clear** so children can make their way safely to their lines.
- Continue to **maintain 2m social distancing** from all adults and children out with your household.
- Adults and carers **wear face-coverings** whilst in the playground and leaving through the car park.
- Please don't spend time chatting to other parents and carers in the playground.
- On entering the playground, **ALL** children are required to dismount from their bikes and scooters and push them up to the bike/ scooter racks.
- During Covid-19 restrictions we cannot permit parents and carers into school unless in exceptional circumstances.
- Staff will continue to be in the playground to support with drop off and pick times.
- If your child arrives late at school, please bring them to the school office, where a member of staff will welcome them into school.

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

Classes within School	
Start time 8:45am End time 2:55pm (12:05pm on Friday)	Start time 9:00am End time 3:10pm (12:20pm on Friday)
P1a	P1b
P2	P1/2
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 P4-P7 children are required to bring a packed lunch, with those entitled to free school meals continuing to receive BACS payments until the Easter break. Children will continue to eat their lunch in their classrooms to avoid mass gatherings of children in line with national guidance. Cleaning procedures will be implemented at lunch times.

Further information about Free School Meals during this period can be found here:

https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/855/school_meals/117/free_school_meals_and_clothing_grants/3

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 day's children have PE they come to school dressed in sportswear. During this time, PE will continue to take place outdoors.

Personal Belongings

As before, we are asking that children do not bring any personal belongs to school except their snack, a water bottle and lunch (if required.) These should be clearly labelled with your child's name and class. All stationery is provided by school so children should not bring pencil cases with them.

Safety Measures to Support Return

I want to reassure you that our priority is to ensure the return to school 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 continues to have 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/>

Risk Assessment

As before, all schools and ELC settings have been risk assessed with colleagues from our Health and Safety service, with enhanced health and safety measures and protocols put in place that follow the current public health and government guidance.

These include observing the age-appropriate physical distancing measures outlined by current government guidance as well as public health advice to help reduce the spread of the virus, guidance on handwashing and hygiene, use of PPE, updated fire safety arrangements and use of transport

Enhanced Cleaning

Every school will continue to have an enhanced cleaning regime in place, with staff on duty throughout the school day. Toilets, door handles, bannisters and other surfaces in constant use will be cleaned on a rotational basis to ensure the highest possible levels of cleanliness. Hand sanitisers will be at the entrances and in all appropriate areas across our school to enable learners and staff to hand sanitise regularly.

Transport/Safe Routes to School

School transport will continue to run as normal and there will continue to be crossing patrols in place for those who have been asked to attend, or who have a critical childcare space.

Face Masks, Face Coverings and PPE

Midlothian Council has reviewed the expectations related to the wearing of face masks as part of our enhanced measures to provide further assurance to staff and children.

- There is now an expectation that all ELC staff wear face masks at all times.
- There is now an expectation that Primary School staff will wear face masks at all times.
- Face masks will also be worn by all visitors to schools/ELCs and also outside at pick-up and drop-off times whenever on school/ELC premises, even outside.

Also during this time, only essential visitors will be allowed in school with all other meetings taking place virtually. During this period, parents and carers will not be permitted in school buildings other than by prior arrangement with the school and as the only option available.

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 this last year and I want to do everything possible to reassure them that our school and ELC setting is doing everything possible to keep them safe.

COVID-19 asymptomatic testing programme for school and ELC staff

The new Schools/ELC Asymptomatic Testing Programme is being put in place this week as part of the package of COVID-19 risk reduction mitigations in schools across Scotland. Along with the other protective measures we are implementing to keep our school community safe, regular testing of staff will help to further reduce risks for staff and children and young people in our school.

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 the recent lockdown as well as focusing on the core curriculum areas of literacy and numeracy.

Parents Consultations

We have decided to postpone P4-P7 consultations until after the Easter break. This will allow teachers to assess where children are with their learning following remote learning and plan appropriate next steps.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the incredible work, effort and commitment you have demonstrated in recent times towards supporting your children with their learning under very difficult

circumstances which I am sure many of you have experienced. Your contributions have been invaluable in maintaining the momentum and motivation of all.

I would also like to extend the gratitude to our excellent staff team who have worked very hard at maintaining their focus on our children's learning and have demonstrated unwavering commitment to our school community during such difficult and unprecedented times.

Lockdown has been a challenging time for all of us and we hope that going forward will be a more sustainable and settled period for us all. We are very excited to have our school community together again and look forwards to our children in P4-P7 returning on Monday 15th of March.

We will continue to keep in touch if we update our plans or if we need to make changes due to new Scottish government guidance.

Enjoy the last week for remote learning with your child and join them on Friday if you can, at our 'live' virtual assembly as we celebrate our remote learning adventure. Hopefully an adventure that we need to never go on again!

Take care and stay safe.

Kind regards

Vicky Morgan
Head Teacher