**For website**

**Early Learning and childcare 1140 hours update**

Due to COVID-19 the Scottish Government has paused the statutory requirement for the delivery of 1140 hours of early learning and childcare for all 3 and 4 year olds and eligible 2 year olds, which was due to start in August.

Although the statutory requirement remains at 600 hours Midlothian remain committed to delivering 1140 hours per year of early learning and childcare (ELC) from all of our local authority establishments and in partnership with our funded providers. The effect of the Covid-19 lockdown on the building and construction sector has meant that our plans for infrastructure and expansion work at some of our establishments have been delayed.

**Childminders**

Childminders were able to reopen from Wednesday 3 June 2020 if they wished to do so.

**Fully outdoor childcare providers**

Fully outdoor childcare providers were able to reopen from Wednesday 3 June 2020 if they wished to do so. Vogrie ELC provision is currently open providing an all year service and has places available.

**Early Learning and Childcare Settings**

From the 15 July ELC settings were able to reopen if they wished to do so.

Guidance issued on 30 July will ease the current restrictions in place for the childcare sector from the 10 August. This reflects progress made in suppressing coronavirus in Scotland since the previous guidance was produced.

Our current plans are for all Local Authority settings to re-open from Wednesday 12 August 2020. Children will return on a phased basis to ensure a well supported transition back to Early Learning and Childcare.

Guidance issued on July 30 will enable us to deliver:

* 1140 hours per year of ELC from around 80% of our establishments
* A maximum of 886 hours per year (three and half days) of ELC from all our remaining establishments with the option of a blended placement to take the offer to 1140 hours. Blended placements could be taken with funded providers including childminders and third sector partners.
* Our funded providers and child-minders will be funded to deliver 1140 hours.

During week beginning 3 August we will be in discussion with our Head Teachers to confirm our plans and then letters will be issued to all parents to confirm offers of places based on the above plans. Our LA settings were planning for an offer of 600 hours and all settings will now need to review their offer in light of the updated guidance.

We appreciate the understanding that parents have shown throughout these challenging and difficult times and we look forward to being able to re-open our settings in August 2020, in line with Scottish Government requirements.

**Parent Club**

Parent Club is launching a new campaign to support parents and carers with the return to school and ELC. This includes information about the new guidelines as well as advice and support about settling in, managing mental health, and more. It also has information about the 1140 hours expansion and the entitlement to funded ELC.