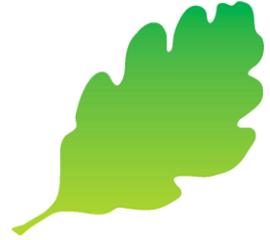


10 August 2020



Dear Parents/Carers

### **Return of children to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)**

I hope you have all had a lovely summer and an opportunity to spend time with family and friends.

Last week the Scottish Government announced that the scientific advice and evidence in relation to the current suppression of COVID-19 will allow the full time return of all schools and ELC from the start of the new term in August.

This is really good news for our youngest children who will be able to return to their ELC settings with enhanced health and safety measures in place that follow the current public health and government guidance. Some children have already returned to our funded provider settings and all our school ELC settings will re-open on 12th August with reconnection activities for our returners.

I am pleased to advise that our ELC settings will be moving towards implementing the delivery of the 1140 hours expansion for 3 and 4 year olds and eligible two year olds as soon as possible. Our ELC children will return on 600 hours as planned and we will be reviewing our staffing, and meeting with HTs to discuss capacity in all our settings.

We expect that many of our ELC settings will be able to move to delivering the expanded hours as previously planned but we may still face some delivery challenges which will mean that some settings will progress more slowly than others. For these settings we are looking at alternative models to allow everyone to get 1140 hours this session.

Blended ELC could be time in school ELC shared with time with a childminder, funded provider or using our 50 week provision at Scots Corner or our outdoor ELC at Vogrie. Alternatively all your child's 1140 hours offer could be taken at any of these settings.

If your child was already attending a school ELC setting prior to lockdown, then you should have had information sent out in late June informing you of the days your child will attend and what date they will start back.

If your child is a new start, you should have had information sent out in late June informing you of the days your child will attend and what date they will start along with information about virtual induction and settling visits.

If you have not received this information you should contact your ELC setting directly. Admin staff will be back in schools on Monday 10 August and should be able to help.

With regard to our Funded Provider partners, we have confirmed that we will fund up to 1140 hours for eligible children according to the hours each setting can deliver within the terms of the national guidance.

Some of our Funded Provider partners may also face operational challenges around delivering services in line with the new guidance but they are all actively looking at how they can maximise their offer.

I appreciate that the last five months have been a challenge for us all and I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank all our children, families, and ELC staff for their strength and commitment during the closures.

Staff have worked very hard prior to anyone returning to any of our settings to ensure that we are following all guidance. Risk assessments have been carried out in all our schools and ELC settings and we have plans in place for increased cleaning regimes, appropriate health and safety measures and new protocols in place.

Your child's setting will also keep you updated about their specific plans at the beginning of the new term and this will include any new guidance on drop off and pick up from ELC arrangements, meals and snacks.

Finally, thank you very much again for your support. I very much look forward to welcoming your child back to their ELC settings or to them joining us later this month as they start their early learning and childcare journey in our early learning and childcare settings.

Yours sincerely

*Julie Fox*

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