



Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and Early Learning and Childcare

September 2020

COVID-19

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

Contents.....	2
1. Education Provision.....	4
Return to School.....	4
Organisation of the School Day.....	6
Physical Distancing.....	10
Curriculum and Assessment.....	11
Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs.....	11
2. Health, Wellbeing and Safety.....	13
Health.....	13
Wellbeing.....	14
Safety.....	15
3. Staffing.....	24
4. Contingency Planning.....	25
5. Communication.....	25
Appendix 1.....	26
Appendix 2.....	28

Operational Guidance for Early Learning and Childcare and Schools

1. Education Provision

Return to School

It is the Scottish Government's intention that all children and young people, in all year groups, will return to school full-time from the autumn term in August.

This updated guidance reflects the latest scientific evidence and advice and the significant progress that Scotland has made in suppressing the virus. It remains contingent, however, on continuing success in this regard and updated public health guidance.

The Scottish Government and the Education Recovery Group have agreed that schools will reopen on 11 August. They expect that all pupils will be in school full-time by 18 August at the very latest. The Scottish Government will bring forward an Educational Continuity Direction to that effect.

In Midlothian this means that ALL primary school children will come back to school on Wednesday 12 August, with individual arrangements in secondary schools over the course of the first week resulting in ALL secondary schools having full attendance by 18 August.

For Early Learning and Childcare, this means that all Local Authority settings can 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.

What's changed for ELC?

Guidance issued on July 30 has eased the current restrictions on group sizes and blended childcare arrangements. Given the ongoing suppression of the virus, and updated scientific advice, management of children in consistent cohorts of 8 will no longer be required. This recognises the importance for children and families of access to childcare. However, this does not mean that settings should return to normal operation. Although blended placements can occur it is still important to limit children's contacts.

The guidance issued on July 30 will enable us to deliver:

- 1140 hours per year of ELC from around 80% of our establishments
- In settings that are oversubscribed deliver a maximum of 886 hours per year (three and half days) of ELC 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.

Blended placements

In order to minimise the number of contacts and risk of transmission, attendance at multiple ELC settings should be reduced as far as possible. Parents and carers should be encouraged and supported to limit the number of settings their child attends. However, the balance of scientific advice supports the use of more settings where required to ensure high quality childcare is available to children and in support of parents' need. For children who attend multiple settings, either ELC settings or childminders, consideration should be given to how they are supported to ensure good hygiene practices (washing hands, not sharing

resources, etc.) when moving between settings, and how their contacts with other groups of children are managed, based on an appropriate risk assessment in each setting.

Limiting children's contacts in ELC

- This will reduce likelihood of direct transmission, to allow for more effective contact tracing through Test and Protect, and reduce the overall number who need to isolate in the event of a child becoming ill with COVID-19.
- Contacts should be limited by managing children within groups. Consistency of groups is beneficial, and efforts should be made to keep children within the same groups for the duration of the day or session, where possible. More than one group can use a large space, but children should not mix freely with children in other groups, including in open plan settings. The management of groups should reflect the circumstances of the setting.
- The appropriate size of groups will depend on the age and overall number of children, and the layout of the setting. The general approach should be to minimise the size of groups where possible. The advisory sub-group on education and children's issues have said: "The evidence base and the advice of the sub-group would be to support a move to cohort sizes for children under five in line with those aged 5-12 assuming the level of infection remains low, appropriate surveillance, test and protect and all the other appropriate mitigations and measures are in place."
- It would therefore be reasonable for children to be managed in groups up to the size encountered in primary school, for example 25 to 30 children. However, larger indoor groupings should be avoided. Advice regarding number of cohort groups and associated staffing will be given by the Early Years team.
- Children are not required to physically distance from each other, or from adults. It is important for children to feel secure and receive warmth and physical contact that is appropriate to their needs, in particular when they are receiving personal care, need comforting or reassurance. Keyworkers will need to be close to the children, particularly young children and should feel confident to do so.
- Staff members should work with the same groups where possible throughout the day, and a number of key workers may work together. If cover is required for breaks, toileting etc., this should be managed within the staff working with a particular group. If staff need to work with other groups, this should be for limited periods. Physical distancing of 2 metres must be maintained between adults
- A flexible approach to the use of all existing spaces within the setting should be considered.
- Consideration should be given to the removal of unnecessary items in the setting to maximise capacity and decrease the number of items requiring cleaning, while ensuring the children still have adequate resources and furnishings to support quality experiences.
- Sharing of resources should be minimised. Where resources are used by different groups (e.g. on a rotational basis), consideration should be given to cleaning between use.

Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard

- Quality is at the heart of the delivery of funded Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) entitlement.
- To ensure that funded ELC entitlement is delivered in high quality settings, the sector has been working towards the introduction of Funding Follows the Child. This was to have been introduced alongside the statutory roll out of 1140 hours of funded ELC entitlement in August 2020.
- Funding Follows the Child is 'provider neutral' and is underpinned by a National Standard that to be a funded provider – regardless of whether they are in the public, private or third sector, or childminders – settings will have to meet. The criteria of the National Standard focuses on what

August 2020

children and their families should expect from their ELC experience, irrespective of where they access their funded entitlement.

- Scottish Government has published interim guidance on the requirements for ELC settings and local authorities regarding the delivery of Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard from August 2020.

Interim guidance for Funding Follows the Child can be found here



ELC+-+Covid-19+-+
Funding+Follows+the

The updated guidance for ELC can be found here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reopening-early-learning-and-childcare-services/>

Organisation of the School Day

Drop off/pick up

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 14 (72 and 73)

Schools should make careful arrangements for parents/carers to drop off and collect children and young people, to ensure that large gatherings of people can be avoided and physical distancing between adults and children of different groupings is maintained. Schools should consult parents/carers on their plans and ensure that any arrangements put in place are communicated clearly to parents/carers.

Parents should not enter school buildings unless required. Schools should consider:

- staggered drop off/pick up times or locations, so that not all children arrive onsite at one time as long as this does not reduce the overall amount of learning time in school for children and young people, **within a 15 minute window**
- School grounds should be closed until 15 minutes before school start times to avoid crowds of people gathering
- if the school has additional access points, consideration should be given as to whether it would be beneficial to open these to reduce congestion
- consideration must be given to where children go as they arrive at the school
- if parents or carers are dropping off younger children, they should be discouraged from gathering outside the school and should maintain distancing of 2m, as far as practicable, when dropping off their children. Appropriate markings may be introduced at the school gates
- for those arriving by car, parents should be encouraged to park further away from the school and then walk with their children to avoid congestion, or alternatively use active travel routes where feasible. Car-sharing with children of other households should be discouraged

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

- where learning spaces can be accessed directly from outside, this may be encouraged to decrease interactions between individuals in circulation spaces and to facilitate sanitising without congestion
- individual arrangements should be made for parents of children with additional support needs or disabilities, who may normally drop their children off within the school building, and those who arrive at school using school transport, including taxis.

Schools should communicate these arrangements to parents and carers in advance of their child's start date.

Free School Meals / Break and Lunch Times

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 31 (153 and 154)

Local authorities' duty to provide free school meals to children and young people who are eligible for them remains. While BACs payments have been made during the COVID period, this will cease on 21 August. On 24 August, school kitchens will provide a packed lunch service which will be done on an advanced ordering basis.

Children in ELC will be provided with packed lunches initially.

Children and young people will be required to bring a packed lunch with them to school until 16 October. More details of this will follow. Please ensure this is communicated to parents and carers. BACS payments will continue for P4 upwards, and P1-3 will continue to be provided with a packed lunch.

Schools may wish to consider staggered break and lunch times, etc (although these will not be suitable for all schools, and staggering break and lunch times to an extent that they could reduce the overall amount of time children and young people can spend learning in school must be avoided). Localised solutions should be agreed and, as far as possible, children, young people and parents/carers should be involved in these discussions. **Lunches should be eaten in classrooms.**

If children and young people go offsite for lunch, they should follow the rules in place for wider society, for example wearing a face covering when entering a shop. Risk assessments should consider procedures for when children and young people leave and return to school premises, including hand hygiene. Schools may wish to contact local shops in advance to alert them to plans.

Access to drinking water

Local authorities remain under a duty to ensure that free drinking water is available to children and young people throughout the day and schools are expected to continue to meet this duty whilst taking account of the latest health protection advice.

Visitors in School

Protocols will be required due to the number of entrances requiring to be used by children and young people as well as parents and carers. Plans should be clearly communicated and signage applied to support the protocol and social distancing rules.

Schools should inform parents and carers that only one parent/carer should enter the school playground with their child to minimise the number of adults in the vicinity of the school.

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

The following should be considered by schools for their agreed protocols:

- Contact between children, parents and carers with other families should be minimised
- Parents and carers should be encouraged not to gather in playgrounds or at entrances to schools
- Pick up and drop off points should be communicated clearly to parents and carers (children should be met on arrival and escorted through the building)
- Handwashing/ sanitising should be available to everyone entering and leaving a building
- Different buildings and local contexts will require different arrangements for staggered entry and exit
- There should be no visiting staff in schools except Visiting Specialists and supply staff and professionals from Midlothian, including colleagues from Children's Services. Staff in the Early Years team will be based in settings to support until the October break. Visiting staff should follow the same hygiene protocols as other staff. Foyers should have clear guidance for any such visitors. If possible, the exit for visitors should be separate to the entrance.
- Schools should already be in discussion with services with whom we have a Service Level Agreement, for example Play Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Visual Impairment Service to ensure continued support while adhering to public health guidance
- Any other visitors should use Zoom/ Teams to communicate with schools

Visiting Specialists and supply staff and professionals from Midlothian who are able to physically distance should only visit one setting per day.

Please ask yourself is this visit essential – could the task be completed through virtual/online methods?

- Minimise the number of sustained contacts to those that are essential only.
- Planning activities should take place outdoors if at all possible

The following principles should underpin any planning:

- Adult visitors to schools should be strictly limited to those that are deemed essential to support children and young people.
- Two metre physical distancing between adults, and between adults and children/young people who are not from the same house hold, should be maintained.
- Where adults cannot keep 2 metre distance and are interacting fact-to-face for a sustained period of 15 minutes or more, face coverings should be worn.
- Movement between schools should be kept to a minimum until further notice.
- Every effort should be made to ensure the support of visiting professionals through lower risk methods (e.g. digitally/outdoors).
- Where movement across schools is necessary the number of interactions should be minimised.
- Parents should not enter school building unless essential.
- Arrangements for visiting professionals should be communicated clearly to staff and the wider community

If a visit into school is deemed essential the following protocol should be followed:

Before visiting a school building, Visiting Specialists and supply staff and professionals from Midlothian should:

- be aware of the infection control procedures within Midlothian Council and relevant national guidance;
- read the establishments risk assessment any risk assessments relating to the individual children and young people involved in the visit;

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

- contact school to ensure availability of appropriate PPE as required;
- check that the school can safely accommodate the visit; the support provided by visiting professionals will have to be agreed, in advance, with the senior leadership team of the school and co-ordinated with the potential of visits from other services.
- the availability of adequate space within the setting needs to be considered to ensure appropriate physical distancing;
- maintain communication so that the child or young person, family and staff working directly with them and management team are in full agreement with the need for the visit and are prepared for the visit.
- safe use of resources, including: equipment sharing protocols and appropriate cleaning.

Maintenance Work

- Any facilities management work carried out within the school setting should adhere to the principles of physical distancing and be subject to risk assessment to put in place mitigating actions. Procedures should be put in place for deliveries to minimise person-to-person contact.

Movement around the School Building

Careful timetabling should be used to minimise movement around the school building. A one-way system should be used where possible. If classrooms have doors to the outside of the school, these should be used for entry and exit, with appropriate risk assessment of security.

Bells should be switched off to allow for staggered movement at changeover times eg break and lunchtimes and movement between classes in secondary schools.

Toilet areas should be carefully controlled to ensure that they do not ever become crowded and that they remain clean.

Fire Action Plans should be reviewed to ensure muster points and exit points allow for physical distancing where possible.

Schools should have a fire drill as soon as possible on return to school to ensure everyone is clear about these new arrangements.

All changes to movement around the school, including entrance and exit arrangements need to be clearly communicated to staff, children and young people and parents and carers. Schools should consider how they will support staff and children to orientate themselves to the revised layouts and circulation patterns described above. The following approaches should be considered:

- A map could be displayed in the educational setting detailing entry/exit points and new circulation patterns, for use by pupils, staff and parents
- Clear signage and colour coding on walls and floors could be implemented prior to return to help with wayfinding, along with taping off of specific areas
- Appropriate visuals will be particularly important for younger children and for some children with additional support needs. These will need to be clear and child friendly to enable them to be understood by as many children as possible. These could include signs in braille (with appropriate arrangements made for hygiene) or signs that display meaningful symbols. Any signage that involves direct interaction from pupils will need to be cleaned regularly and further methods of communication should also be considered.

Classroom/ Other Rooms Layout and Organisation

- Doors, **except fire doors**, should be propped open where possible to minimise touching of door handles and bottlenecks of pupils

Physical Distancing

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 9-13 (40-71)

The COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues has published scientific advice on physical distancing in schools. The advice states:

"Subject to continued suppression of the virus, and to surveillance and mitigations being in place, the balance of the evidence suggests that no distancing should be required between children in primary schools. The evidence is less clear for older pupils but at present we support the same approach being taken in secondary schools on the basis of the balance of known risks, the effectiveness of mitigations and the benefits to young people of being able to attend school."

"In both primary and secondary settings, the preference would always be to avoid large gatherings and crowded spaces and, wherever possible, to keep children and young people within the same groups for the duration of the school day. In giving this advice we recognise the practical challenges. Where possible, timetabling should be reviewed to reduce movement of groups of pupils around the school estate as much as possible."

Early Learning and Childcare

Advice for ELC is contained in the updated guidance:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reopening-early-learning-and-childcare-services/>

The COVID-19 Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues has published scientific advice on physical distancing in schools in **early learning and childcare settings**

[Coronavirus \(COVID 19\): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues – advisory note on physical distancing in early learning and childcare settings \(ELC\) - gov.scot](#)

Primary Schools

On the basis of this scientific advice, and subject to all other risk mitigation measures set out in this advice being appropriately implemented, **there is no requirement for physical distancing between children in primary schools.**

Secondary Schools

The scientific advice is that physical distancing between young people in secondary schools is not required to ensure a safe return to schools.

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

The evidence for this is less clear for older pupils, but at present this approach is being advised for secondary schools on the basis of the balance of known risks, the effectiveness of mitigations and the benefits to young people of being able to attend school.

Exclusions and Part-time Timetables

Our expectation is that as far as possible there is a zero exclusion policy. We understand that for many pupils the reintegration into schools will be very challenging. However we should be utilising all available support pathways to ensure there is no additional impact on any Midlothian child or young person. If as a last resort following discussion with the Schools Group Manager the decision must be made to exclude then careful risk assessment plans must be in place for parents coming to school to collect pupils.

Where a part-time timetable is deemed necessary for any child or young person due to anxiety, social emotional needs etc. there must be close, robust monitoring of this with scheduled meetings at no greater than 6 week intervals. Where pupils are not able to attend full time schools should be utilising new skills around the digital offer to pupils when at home ensuring a fuller offer.

Please ensure that pupils on part-time timetables are not coded as 100% attendance. Use code OAT to ensure accurate recording.

However, within the context of a full return to school, and to provide additional reassurance to young people, staff and parents/carers, where there are opportunities to further minimise risk these should be encouraged. As a precautionary approach therefore secondary schools should encourage distancing where possible between young people particularly in the senior phase.

Distancing should be implemented in a proportionate way. Importantly, schools should ensure that the specific approaches adopted do not introduce capacity constraints and/or prevent a return to full-time learning in school.

Provision of Non-Class Contact Time

With regard to movement of NCCT teachers between classes and across settings, this is permitted but should be minimised wherever possible. Schools should be encouraged to follow SNCT and LNCT guidance on how flexibility of time over a 2 or 4 week period may help to reduce movement of staff across classes.

MNCT will shortly provide further guidance in this regard.

Curriculum and Assessment

School Calendar

A draft calendar and guidance will be sent out following discussion with the Education Strategic Group.

Schools will want to continue to engage with Parents and Carers, for example in parental consultations, meet the teacher, curriculum evenings etc. Guidance will support with the use of appropriate platforms as most of these meetings are expected to take place virtually.

Secondary Schools

To mitigate in some way against large numbers of pupils coming together inside or outside your school building at various points in time during the school day, you may wish to consider operating your timetable

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

on a staggered basis. Secondary Schools will discuss this as a group to agree some common principles across Midlothian schools.

Practical activities, experiments and investigations
Physical activity and sport
Music/singing
Senior phase/SQA National Qualification Courses

Information on these can be found in the National Guidance on page 24 (127-130)

Physical activity and sport

Guidance has been prepared by Education Scotland and physical education practitioners to assist with decision making and the safe implementation of timetabled physical education. The COVID-19 Advisory Sub Group on Education and Children's issues has published advice on PE, music and drama in schools. Guidance on organised outdoor sport for children and young people should also be considered when planning and preparing for physical activity and sport.

Home economics

Guidelines on safe practice in home economics have been prepared by Education Scotland and practitioners and are expected to be published in w/c 14 September 2020 on the Education Scotland website.

The provision of activities or clubs outside the usual school timetable

Schools should consider the need for out of hours cleaning when scheduling activities and **should inform their Schools Group Manager of any plans to provide such activities.**

Use of Outdoor Spaces

In ELC the use of outdoor spaces should be maximised wherever possible. Schools may wish to consider the increased use of outdoor spaces when they reopen.

The Outdoor Learning Directory provides links to a variety of resources that can be filtered by subject area and curriculum level. Support and guidance on risk assessment can be found on the Going Out There framework. It can be found here: <https://outdoorlearningdirectory.com/>

Consortia Arrangements

Schools should link with relevant partners to ensure pupils are fully aware of the expectations and differences from expectations within school setting i.e. Colleges asking pupils to wear face masks, travelling on public transport. National guidance should be reinforced with senior phase pupils that may be considered as an adult when out with the school setting.

Foundation Apprenticeships in ELC will continue but there will be no placements until October at this point. There will be a comprehensive virtual training offer.

Modern Apprenticeships in ELC will continue and all MAs will be placed in settings. Training will be virtual until October in the first instance.

Young people in the senior phase may require to spend time in college environments. They should ensure that they follow the guidance on the appropriate approach to these specific circumstances while on campus. This has now been included in updated guidance for colleges.

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

Remote Learning

Schools should inform their Schools Group Manager of the number of children who are not expected to return to school and who will participate in remote learning for health or other reasons.

Children and Young People with Additional Support Needs

We expect all children, young people and staff who are shielding to be able to return to school in August, **unless given advice from a GP or healthcare provider not to**. Shielding will be paused from 1 August. This means that clinically extremely vulnerable children, young people and staff can follow the same guidance as the rest of Scotland.

Children and young people who may be experiencing significant symptoms of anxiety, depression or significant behavioural changes may require additional support from their class teacher, pastoral care staff, and school counselling (when available) or Educational Psychology Services, or specialist family and health services.

The following guidance will ensure where possible a consistent experience for **Midlothian pupils** with complex needs, additional support needs and social and emotional needs. Schools should ensure that learners with additional support needs are not disadvantaged.

Guidance on shared placements & additional adults / staff visiting the school

Two metre physical distancing between adults, and between adults and children and young people who are not from the same household should be maintained. This includes non-staff adult visitors to the school eg contractors, deliveries etc. Adult visitors to schools should be strictly limited only to those that are necessary to support children and young people or the running of the school and arrangements should be communicated clearly to staff and the wider school community.

Maintaining 2m distancing between adults and children whenever possible will help mitigate risk, but it is acknowledged that this is not always possible or desirable, particularly when working with younger primary school children or children with additional support needs who may require personal or intimate care. **Where adults cannot keep 2m distance and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (about 15 minutes or more) with other adults and/or children and young people, face coverings should be worn (or, in certain limited circumstances, PPE - see section on PPE and other protective barrier measures, below).**

Further advice on PPE can be found in the National Guidance Page 14 (74-78), and in this document on Page 14

Movement between schools (e.g. of temporary/supply/peripatetic staff etc) should be kept to a minimum, until further notice. This includes attendance at school of those who visit, such as visiting teachers, psychologists, nurses and social workers **and those providing therapeutic support**. Recognising the importance of holistic support for children and young people requirement to meet their needs, every effort should be made to secure these wider inputs through lower risk methods such as digital/virtual means or outdoor settings. **This does not mean that none of these services and supports can be provided. The management of visitors to schools requires careful risk assessment in order to prevent transmission of the virus within and between schools.**

Where movement across locations is necessary to deliver school operations the number of interactions should be minimised, and the 2m distancing between adults should be adhered to wherever possible.

With this updated advice, shared placement movements should be kept to a minimum. Where possible pupils should only attend one setting a day as long as this does not reduce the education offer below the full time expectation.

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

For further advice, please contact Andrew Sheridan

Risk assessments / PPE in additional needs settings

The use of **appropriate** PPE by staff within schools should be based on a clear assessment of risk and need for an individual child or young person, such as personal care, where staff come into contact with blood and body fluids or lift children and young people.

There should also be more frequent cleaning of rooms/areas that must be used by different groups, including staff (e.g. classrooms, toilet blocks, changing rooms and staff areas).

Risk assessments should already exist for children and young people with more complex needs, including those with emotional and behavioural needs. **These risk assessments should be updated as a matter of priority in light of changes to provision such as environment and staffing.**

Local infection control procedures that outline safety and protocols should also be stringently followed. This includes procedures for the disposal of soiled items; laundering of any clothes, towels or linen; and cleaning equipment for children and young people, such as hoists and wheelchairs.

The impact of wearing a face covering for learners with additional support needs including any level of hearing loss should be carefully considered, as communication for many of these learners including hearing impaired young people relies in part on being able to see someone's face clearly.

This is also important for children and young people who are acquiring English and who rely on visual cues to enable them to be included in learning. Individuals who may not be able to handle and wear face coverings as directed (e.g. young learners, or those with additional support needs or disabilities) should not wear them as it may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission.

Every Midlothian school will be provided with a starter pack of transparent face coverings for these reasons.

Careful consideration should be given to the cleaning regime for specialist equipment (e.g. in practical subjects or for children with additional support needs), sensory rooms, practical subjects with specialist equipment and dining halls, etc. to ensure safe use.

Midlothian Expectations re MAMs, CSPs & IEPs

Schools should ensure that all multiagency meetings are up to date, planning must be put into place immediately for any meetings that could not take place throughout the COVID-19 period and communication to parents should state when these meetings will take place within the first half term of returning to school.

Communication is increasingly high priority upon return to school, especially so for our young people and their families with additional support. School staff should ensure that regular early contact is made with pupils that may not be able to return straight away, and where possible meetings and discussions should be virtual or via a phone call.

Guidance for schools on what vulnerable category includes in model

August 2020

Schools should consider the arrangements required to support children with additional support needs learning during any localised outbreaks of COVID-19 as part of contingency planning. For some children and young people with additional support needs the return to home learning may have a significant impact on them, due to further changes in their learning approach. Wherever possible, consistency in learning approaches and support should be maintained. It is recognised that this will be balanced against the need to ensure that any outbreak of COVID-19 is contained and managed.

Schools should therefore ensure contingency plans are in place to maximise supporting pupils with ASN along with category 1 pupils.

2. Health, Wellbeing and Safety

Health

See **Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020** Page 20 and 21 (110 – 119)

Children, young people and staff who are clinically vulnerable

Clinically vulnerable people can return to work, following a dynamic risk assessment, and arrangements should be made to enable appropriate physical distancing staying 2 metres away from others wherever possible, in line with current advice on the return to school.

Children, young people and staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable (shielding)

Shielding will be paused from 1 August. This means that clinically extremely vulnerable children, young people and staff can follow the same guidance as the rest of Scotland.

Attendance

National Parent Forum has produced guidance for parents on the return to school. It can be found here: <https://www.npfs.org.uk/>

National guidance is clear that measures of compulsion for attendance **should only be used as a last resort**, once all other approaches to support attendance have been undertaken. Additional codes will be developed within SEEMiS to support the recording and monitoring of attendance and absence, including specific codes relating to COVID-19. **They can be found here:**



SEEMiS COVID-19
Codes V3.pdf

Support for children and young people with Additional Support Needs, Anxious Children, Young People, Families and Staff

See **Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020** Page 21(115-119)

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

We know that change can be particularly hard for autistic young people and we are concerned about the impact of returning to school after so much time off, we want to make sure that it is as smooth as possible for the young people, families and teachers. Therefore we are advising the dissemination and use of the Scottish Government's Nation Autism Implementation Team guidance for schools which can be found here: <https://www.thirdspace.scot/nait/covid-19-return-to-school/>

We expect schools to be using this guidance and will be sharing this intention in our parental communication.

The past few months have been a time of considerable change and there will undoubtedly be moments of anxiety. It will be important to take gradual steps in terms of reintroduction to safe practices and intervention with others. It will be important to phase some of this in through family interaction prior to the return to school, particularly for children and young people with additional support needs. It will also be vital for relevant services to consider mental health awareness.

Support for Minority Ethnic Children, Young People and Staff

Employers should be mindful of their duties under the Equality Act 2010 at all times. **All Minority Ethnic staff from South Asian backgrounds with underlying health conditions and disabilities, who are over 55, or who are pregnant, should be individually risk assessed, and appropriate reasonable adjustments should be made following risk assessment.**

Wellbeing

We are taking a positive and solution-focused approach to supporting the mental health of children and young people, recognising that this is a time of emotional challenge for many. The underlying principles for promoting the Health and Wellbeing of staff and pupils on return to schools are Resilience and Nurture. A multi-agency Health and Wellbeing (Young People) Strategy Group has created a range of practical resources for school staff on a new Health and Wellbeing Portal on GLOW. Some of these documents are shared here;



Recovery Curriculum
final 25.5.20.pdf



RESILIENCE
REFLECTION TOOL 2€



Nurture Reflection
Tool June 2020.pdf

A Health and Wellbeing Survey has been sent out to all parents/carers and pupils in the secondary sector to gather information on how families have managed the challenges of digital learning during lockdown. At the start of the new session, this survey will be extended to include primary schools as well as secondary so that we can understand how well children and young people and their parents/carers are adapting to the return to school.

A range of other resources and actions have been taken to support our young people, their families and school staff, with plans focussing on COVID 19 specific issues such as bereavement and loss.

The Educational Psychology Service continues to support allocated children and young people and has extended support to those not already known to the service through a weekly telephone Helpline.

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020



EPS Telephone
Helpline info 2020.pdf

Further support from Children's Services through a Listening Line for children, young people and their parents is provided on a daily basis.



Listening Line
numbers.docx.pdf

Resources for parents, carers and professionals are also available on the Educational Psychology Service website <https://mideps.edublogs.org>

The psychological impact of the outbreak and the necessary public health control measures may have had significant social, emotional and developmental effects on some children and young people and, consequently, achievement. Some children and young people may experience anxiety about the transition from home to returning to school but also many of them will have enjoyed the experience of spending more time at home. Children and young people may need additional time and support to re-adjust to the school environment. Similarly, school staff have been facing significant pressure, support for their mental health and wellbeing is essential both for them and for the social and emotional wellbeing of their children and young people.

A Health and Wellbeing Strategy Group for staff has been established to monitor and address needs as schools return.

Safety

Safeguarding

New stresses arising from Early Learning and Childcare, school and business closures, family confinement and isolation alongside physical and psychological health impacts, could be a trigger for abuse and neglect. School staff must be alert to signs that individuals or groups have been and/or are continuing to use the pandemic as an opportunity for criminal or sexual exploitation of children.

This is occurring at a time when children and families have been less visible to a range of professionals who are normally engaged with them and when services and practitioners working with children are under acute pressure.

An updated training programme has been sent to all schools to deliver to their staff on one of the August in-service days.



Annual CP Schools
Update - 2020.pptx

Handwashing and Hygiene Practices

Scottish Government guidance for non-healthcare settings should be used.

https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2973/documents/1_covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf

Early Learning and Childcare

Infection prevention and control

There are a range of key practices that ELC settings should consider in relation to hygiene and the prevention and control of the spread of infection.

Consideration should be given to the cleaning strategy to be adopted in the setting once it reopens. All cleaning should be carried out in accordance with [COVID-19 – guidance for non-healthcare settings](#) and [Infection Prevention and Control in Childcare Settings](#) guidance.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

The use of PPE by staff within childcare facilities should continue to be based on a clear assessment of risk and need for an individual child or young person, such as personal care where staff come into contact with blood and body fluids. Following any risk assessment (individual or organisational), where the [need for PPE has been identified](#) should be readily available and staff should be trained on its use as appropriate.

No additional PPE measures are required for general use in school aged childcare settings. Staff should continue to follow existing guidance on the use of PPE. Examples of this follow:

Staff carrying out intimate care should wear an apron and gloves.

Staff should have access to disposable single use gloves for spillage of blood or other body fluids and disposing of dressings or equipment. Local infection control procedures that outline safety and protocols should be stringently followed. This includes procedures for the disposal of soiled items; laundering of any clothes, towels or linen; and cleaning equipment for children and young people, such as hoists and wheelchairs.

Hand hygiene is essential before and after all contact with a child receiving intimate or personal care, before putting on PPE, after removal of PPE and after cleaning equipment and the environment. Hands should be washed with soap and water.

The key personal hygiene measures that all children, young people and staff should follow are:

- frequent washing/sanitising of hands for 20 seconds and drying thoroughly, and always when entering/leaving the building, before/after eating and after using the toilet. Schools should develop their own operational plans to facilitate this.
- encouraging children, young people and staff to avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose
- using a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze, and use bins that are emptied regularly for tissue waste

It will be the responsibility of every individual in the school to observe good hygiene practice to minimise the risk of infection. **Schools should develop their own plans in this regard and ensure that they are clearly communicated.**

Signage should be applied appropriately, including in toilets.

Adequate facilities should be available for hand hygiene, including handwashing facilities that are adequately stocked or have alcohol-based hand rub at key areas. **This has been ordered for all ELC settings and schools.**

August 2020

Outdoor hand basins or hand sanitisers should be available at entry/exit points, to allow all building users to wash/sanitise their hands as they enter/leave the building at pick up/drop off time and at break/lunch times.

Help should be given to those children and young people who struggle to wash their hands independently.

Over time it is possible that children and young people will become complacent about hand hygiene. Schools should involve them in making plans to ensure continued rigour.

This should be reinforced regularly.

School uniforms/clothing and staff clothing should be washed/cleaned as normal. **A relaxed attitude to dress code should continue at this time.**

Risk Assessment

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 5 (15-22)

All schools carried out a risk assessment supported by Health and Safety colleagues and Professional Associations where appropriate. There will now be areas and activities in schools not covered by this risk assessment. Schools should ensure that these are revisited often and updated as necessary.

Risk assessments should be in place for children and young people with more complex needs, including those with social, emotional and behavioural needs. These should be updated for the return to school, to reflect staffing, hygiene, PPE requirements and environment.

It is a legal requirement that local authorities and Head Teachers ensure that these risk assessments are updated to reflect the revised planning assumption of a full return to school.

All risk assessments should continue to be reviewed regularly and as circumstances change. **These should be signed off by Head Teachers on SPHERA.**

PPE

For further information on the types of PPE required in specific circumstances please see the **National Guidance Page 14 (74-83)**

The risk assessment should include the use of PPE:

- All staff viewed the PPE Safe Use video in week beginning 15 June- any staff absent that week, or new staff starting next session should view the video as soon as possible.
- Rachel Tulloch remains as the sole contact for the ordering of PPE
rachel.tulloch@midlothian.gov.uk

The types of PPE required in specific circumstances are set out below:

- **Routine activities: No PPE is required when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom or school settings.**

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

- **Suspected COVID-19:** A fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn by staff if they are looking after a child or young person who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and 2m distancing cannot be maintained while doing so.
- If the child or young person who has become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 needs direct personal care, gloves, aprons and a fluid-resistant surgical mask should be worn by staff.
- Eye protection should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, or vomiting.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the areas where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.

For the majority of staff in schools, PPE will not normally be required or necessary. Where it is required or necessary the following arrangements will apply.

Face Coverings

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 15-16 (79-83)

Handwashing, respiratory control and physical distancing remain the most important means of infection control in schools.

All staff should wear face visors as a basic means of protection. There will also be a supply of clear face masks for those who wish to use these.

Face coverings should be worn in the following circumstances (except where an adult or child/young person is exempt from wearing a covering):

- Where adults and young people in secondary schools (including special schools and independent and grant aided schools) are moving about the school in corridors and confined communal areas (including toilets) where physical distancing is particularly difficult to maintain; and
- In line with the current arrangements for public transport, where adults and children and young people aged 5 and over are travelling on dedicated school transport.

No-one should be excluded from education on the grounds that they are not wearing a face covering. As is usual, if there are any concerns about a child or young person behaving or acting in a way that doesn't align with school policy or procedure, their behaviour or actions should be discussed with them to resolve those concerns as quickly as possible.

Ventilation

Where it is not possible to keep doors and windows open, and centralised or local mechanical ventilation is present, systems should wherever possible be adjusted to full fresh air. If this is not possible systems should be operated as normal. Where ventilation units have filters present enhanced precautions should be taken when changing filters. Ventilation systems should be checked or adjusted to ensure they do not automatically adjust ventilation levels due to differing occupancy levels.

Responding to COVID Symptoms

August 2020

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 16 (84-102)

The whole school community should be vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19, and to understand what actions they should take if someone develops them, either onsite or offsite. The most common symptoms are:

- new continuous cough
- fever/high temperature
- loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia).

Schools should also maintain an accurate register of absences of children, young people and staff and whether these are due to possible or confirmed COVID-19. Codes for this have been developed in SEEMiS and can be found here:



SEEMiS COVID-19
Codes V3.pdf

Test, Trace, Isolate and Support (Test and Protect)

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 18-19 (95-109)

See Midlothian Guidance here:



Test and Protect
Guidance DRAFT 12I

(ii) Test and Protect

All educational establishments are considered complex settings and cases will be prioritised and escalated to specialist HPTs.

The key initial step is the self-isolation and rapid testing of all symptomatic children, young people and staff. Other children, young people and staff members will not be required to self-isolate unless contacted by the contact tracing service. If a child, young person or staff member tests positive, the HPT will assess what action is needed, taking into account the close contacts the person has had within the school and other factors such as the implementation of mitigating measures, eg cleaning, ventilation and PPE.

If a child, young person (or their parent/carer if under 16 years) or staff member is contacted by a contact tracer and told to self-isolate for fourteen days, the person should leave school to self-isolate at home straight away and, if possible, wear a face covering en route and avoid public transport. The Scottish Government has published advice for employers on how to support people who are asked to self-isolate.

(iii) Outbreak management

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

If an outbreak is confirmed, schools should work with their local HPT to manage it. Actions that schools/local authorities may need to be involved in include (but are not restricted to):

- attendance at multi-agency incident management team meetings
- communications with children, parents/carers and staff
- providing records of school layout / attendance / groups
- implementing enhanced infection, prevention and control measures.

The HPT will make recommendations to the incident management team on self-isolation and on testing of children and staff and the arrangements for doing this. Any discussion of possible school closures should take place between schools, local authorities and local HPTs. Schools should maintain appropriate records to support outbreak control measures, e.g. children, young people and staff attendance, details of pupil groups, visitors to schools, and clinically vulnerable/extremely vulnerable children and young people who are attending school.

Schools should contact the local health protection team **and** their Schools Group Manager if they have two or more cases or an increased rate of background illness.

Registers should be kept up to date and should indicate where absences are due to confirmed or possible cases of COVID-19.

A template has been issued to schools on which all COVID-19 related communication should be recorded.

International travel - self-isolation arrangements

The Chief Medical Officer, Chief Nursing Officer and National Clinical Director wrote to all Directors of Education on 17 August to clarify the arrangements for children and young people returning to Scotland who are not exempt from self-isolation (“quarantine”) rules.

The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 require all those returning to Scotland from non-exempt countries to self-isolate at home or another appropriate location for 14 days. Those self-isolating should not go out to work or school or visit public areas. This point is covered prominently in the sector advice card which should be displayed in all schools. The list of exempt countries is kept under constant review, and schools and local authorities should ensure they are familiar with the most up to date list.

Head Teachers and heads of early learning and childcare settings should ensure that arrangements are in place to identify and support children and young people who need to self-isolate including appropriate safeguarding measures. This includes engaging with children, young people and their families to ensure adherence to the legal requirements.

Directors of Public Health and local health protection teams are available to offer further support where there are concerns.

Detailed guidance is available, as is the list of exempt countries.

Cleaning

Early Learning and Childcare

Consideration should be given to the cleaning strategy to be adopted in the setting once it reopens.

This may be an extension of the cleaning regime normally used in early learning and childcare settings, with touchpoints such as tabletops, chairs, doors, light switches, banisters, equipment sinks, and toilets cleaned more regularly. There should be routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and hard surfaces. This should include equipment staff use, (e.g. telephones, keyboards, door handles, and tables). Settings should ensure regular (at least twice daily) cleaning of commonly touched objects and surfaces (e.g. desks, handles, dining tables, etc.). Toys and equipment that children access should be cleaned when groups of children change – e.g. between sessions (if groups are changing) and at the end of the day or in the morning before the session begins using standard detergent and disinfectant that are active against viruses and bacteria.

Careful consideration should be given to the cleaning regime for sensory rooms and soft play areas, to ensure safe use. It is recommended that children access toys and equipment that are easy to clean. Resources such as sand, water and playdough can be used with regular cleaning of the equipment used. Water and playdough should be replaced on a daily/sessional basis, when groups change.

Children should be discouraged from bringing toys from home to the setting. Some children may require a transitional object or toy as a comforter, and consideration should be given as to how to safely manage this to ensure children are supported in their transition from home to the setting to feel reassured and comforted.

Each setting should be cleaned daily or when children's groups of children change, in preparation for a new group of children being in the next day/session. Additional cleaning hours will be available throughout the day.

Children will require comfortable areas to play. Soft furnishings such as throws, if required, should be used for individual children and should be washed after use. Where children sleep or nap in the setting, children should have individual bedding, stored in individual bags and this should be laundered frequently and as a minimum weekly.

Where possible parents should provide the necessary clothing for outdoor play. Where this is not possible, children should not share outdoor clothes or footwear. Items belonging to the service should be allocated to one child within each session and laundered/cleaned before use by another child.

Surfaces in dining or snack areas should be wiped down and disinfected in between use by each group of children. All crockery and equipment used in the provision of meals and snacks for children should be cleaned with general-purpose detergent and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use.

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

Cleaning of staff areas should be considered as part of the overall cleaning strategy. Staff should use their own cup/cutlery and ensure these are cleaned straight after use.

Enhanced hygiene

Arrangements should be implemented for enhanced hand and respiratory hygiene by adults and children in ELC settings.

Where possible, disposable paper towels or kitchen roll should be used. Where it is age appropriate services can also use hand dryers. Where this is not practical, individual towels must be available for each child, and these must be laundered each day. There are a range of resources available from the NHS to encourage children with handwashing. NHS Education for Scotland (NES) has produced [a video to demonstrate the correct way to wash your hands](#). Antibacterial hand gel is not recommended for children when soap and water is available. Antibacterial hand gel should not be used by children under 12 months.

During this period ELC services must ensure that handwashing facilities are accessible for children. They may wish to have a supply of antibacterial hand gel available to parents and staff at the entrance to the setting. Staff should ensure enhanced hand hygiene measures are in place including washing their own hands and the hands of all children.

For further detail please read ELC guidance.

Tooth brushing

Tooth brushing can continue where there are adequate facilities to do so. Settings operating toothbrushing should follow the Childsmile-updated guidance.

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 7-8 (30-37)

As already planned for the blended learning model, an enhanced environmental cleaning regime is in place. The regime put in place is in line with Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings. This specifies in particular:

- ensuring regular (at least twice daily) cleaning of commonly touched objects and surfaces (e.g. desks, handles, dining tables, shared technology surfaces etc.)
- ensuring that where possible movement of individuals between work stations is minimised and where work spaces are shared there is cleaning between use (e.g. avoid hot desks and instead each individual, children, young people and staff, has a designated desk)
- ensuring there are adequate disposal facilities- pedal bins have been ordered for schools
- wedging doors (other than fire doors) open, where appropriate, to reduce touchpoints
- setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are kept clean and physical distancing is achieved as much as possible

There should also be more frequent cleaning of rooms/areas that must be used by different groups, including staff (e.g. classrooms, toilet blocks, changing rooms and staff areas).

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

Movement of children, young people and staff between classrooms should be minimised wherever possible. Where this cannot be avoided, the provision of appropriate cleaning is essential.

As per previous risk assessments, supplies for young people to wipe down their own desk/chair/surfaces before leaving and, especially, on entering the room should be considered as part of overall hygiene strategies for secondary schools. **Surface wipes have been ordered for secondary schools for this purpose.**

Specialist Equipment

Careful consideration should be given to the cleaning regime for specialist equipment (e.g. in practical subjects or for children with additional support needs), sensory rooms, practical subjects with specialist equipment and dining halls, etc. to ensure safe use. Staff can safely eat in the dining hall if they wish. They must use their own crockery/cutlery in staff areas and ensure these are cleaned with warm general purpose detergent and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use. **Provision for staff to have hot meal must be available eg microwave.**

Resources for Younger Children

Younger children should only access toys and equipment that are easy to clean. Resources such as sand, water and playdough should be used only by consistent groupings of children and should be part of relevant risk assessments.

Consideration should be given to practical alternatives to provide comfort and reassurance, which is particularly important for younger children and children with additional needs. However, if a child brings their own book/bag/personal device that only they use then this should not increase the risk of indirect spread of the virus.

Arrangements for School Bags and School Resources

Children, young people and staff should be instructed to keep **bags on the floor** and not on their desks or worktops.

Children, young people and staff can take books and other resources home, although unnecessary resource sharing including textbooks should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to education and development.

Cleaning between uses should be in accordance with the Health Protection Scotland Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings.

Library Books

Library books should be quarantined for 72 hours upon return to the library. The amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surface is likely to have decreased significantly after this time. School libraries should develop quarantine procedures for returned books and resources. Book drops and book trolleys can be used as they are easy for staff to wheel into a dedicated quarantine area and can be easily labelled.

Transport and Travel

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 25-31 (135-151)

This guidance has been informed by the scientific advice of the COVID-19 Advisory Sub Group on Education and Children's issues, published on 16 July.

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

Local authority arrangements

- Schools should produce a travel plan that shows the local authority current and proposed travel if a local or national lockdown were to be put in place.
- Schools should undertake a survey of families as early as possible to understand how children and young people will be travelling to school when they return, to aid in quantifying the potential public transport issues in local authority areas
- Ensure understanding is shown to children, young people, staff and parents/carers who may be delayed in getting to school due to transport issues
- Additional support should be available for vulnerable families for planning their journey to school
- Include colleges and other relevant partners in planning for school transport, as young people in the senior phase may also be doing some of their learning in colleges, on work placements, or through consortium arrangements
- Ensure that all children and young people travelling on dedicated or public transport have access to hand sanitiser.

Encouraging Active Travel

As far as it is safe to do so, the use of active travel routes by parents, carers, staff and children and young people should be encouraged eg walking and cycling, scooting, wheeling etc should be strongly encouraged. In view of the potential for capacity constraints on public transport to impact on children and young people's ability to attend school, all sustainable and active travel modes should be considered. If bikes are stored in bike sheds/racks consideration should be given to the cleaning of these areas and to reducing time spent at the bikes stores/shed.

3. Staffing

The Scottish Government has made additional funding available to local authorities for the recruitment of additional teachers and other staff to support COVID-19 recovery.

Additional staffing, circa 34.9FTE in Midlothian was procured to support the blended model and the reopening of schools.

A proportion of this extra staffing complement will be required for staff absence, both short and long term.

The remainder will be deployed to those schools with the highest proportion of children with Additional Support Needs in order to support with education recovery. Those schools which had extra staff allocated to them for the blended learning model should not now assume that these staff will attend their school. This allocation of staffing will remain flexible, due to the uncertain nature of the spread of the virus which could ultimately result in a further lockdown. Any return to a home or blended learning model would require a different means of deploying staff.

August 2020

Any recruitment done by schools should continue to be done via Teams or Zoom. Alternative arrangements may be made for senior posts eg DHT and HT.

As agreed by MNCT, working time agreements should remain the same as last session, until further guidance is received and reviewed at an appropriate point in partnership with professional organisations.

Head Teachers will have in place contingency plans to ensure that the absence of any teacher does not prevent in-home or in-school learning from being delivered. Any significant issue in this regard should be discussed with Schools Group Managers.

The Employee Assistance Programme is still available to support any member of staff who requires support. Staff should contact 0800 243 458 or email assistance@workplaceoptions.com

Workforce Capacity

Additional wider workforce staff, such as cleaners and facilities management staff to implement enhanced environmental cleaning regimes, have been organised for schools.

Staff who are having to stay at home due to self-isolation can support educational continuity, for example by supporting remote learning for those children and young people who are unable to return to school. They would then have the capability to check in with each home learner on a daily basis.

Head Teachers should inform their Schools Group Manager of any members of staff who are required to continue to work from home.

Student Placements

No students will be placed in schools prior to the October 2020 school break and that GTC Scotland will work with universities to ensure any adjustments to individual programmes align with their accreditation standards.

Workforce Support

The COVID-19 Education Recovery Group is continuing to discuss the provision of additional professional learning designed to support staff on return to school in August.

4. Contingency Planning

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 37 and 38 (176-187)

Schools should reopen for full-time learning in August, but with a view to being able to change those arrangements at short notice if required.

If the scientific advice is that physical distancing should be introduced for children and young people in schools, then schools must be prepared to enact contingency measures as outlined in their Local Phasing Delivery Plans. We will work with schools to continue work to strengthen these and to plan for different future scenarios. e.g. a range of distancing requirements.

Schools should have available on their websites at least 1 week's worth of work for all children and access to the digital platforms they used during school closure. This will ensure that remote learning can commence at very short notice in the event of a school closure.

We will also continue the work we have been undertaking in relation to tackling digital exclusion. This includes the provision of 1400 devices for Midlothian children and connectivity solutions to support educational continuity when children and young people are learning outside of the school environment and this local activity will be supplemented by the Scottish Government's £30m investment in digital devices and connectivity solutions designed to combat digital exclusion.

Schools should communicate with families already in receipt of a device to ensure they are still required and complete a school-wide audit to identify continuing needs and any new needs arising. A proforma will be issued for this purpose.

5. Communication

See Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on preparing for the start of the new school term in August 2020 Page 39-40 (188-194)

During the reopening of schools, communication with all stakeholders is of paramount importance to minimise the anxiety that may arise on the reopening of schools.

The central education team will continue to communicate regularly with parents and carers to ensure that consistent plans and expectations are outlined. Schools should follow this up with communications to their own school community about their local arrangements and this communication should be available in a range of ways ie letter, website, app.

Engagement with Chairs of Parent Councils will continue, following two engagement sessions in June, to ensure that they are kept up to date with latest policy and guidance, with the first meeting of the session taking place in the first week of term.

Consideration should be given to methods of communication with children and young people to ensure their concerns are heard and that appropriate action is taken. The Recovery Curriculum sets out guidance on how this could be done.

Parents and Carers may be worried about sending their children back to school, or their safety while they are there, so clear and supportive communication is required.

Communication and dialogue with trade unions, staff, parents/carers and children and young people on the reopening of schools should be carefully considered when implementing this guidance, to ensure confidence in the revised arrangements across all school users. Clarity on what and how the revised arrangements will work in practice and what is expected of all parties will be key to ensuring a smooth return to school. This will be particularly relevant for new starters to the school, children, young people and staff.

The channels of communication through which trade unions, children, young people, staff and parents/carers can raise concerns about the implementation of safety measures in individual settings should be made clear.

Schools and local authorities may wish to consider the information and evidence available from available national level survey work with young people on COVID-19. This includes the work conducted jointly by Young Scot, Scottish Youth Parliament and YouthLink Scotland as well as guidance and information from

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

Children's Parliament and Children in Scotland. Local community learning and development services, Parent Councils and local parent umbrella groups should also spread this information. In addition, there is practical support on poverty-sensitive approaches in Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland's survey report on the cost of learning in lockdown.

National information from the following organisations will be useful:

- Parent Club
<https://www.parentclub.scot/>
- National Parent Forum Scotland
<https://www.npfs.org.uk/>
- Parentzone
<https://www.parentzone.me/>
- Education Scotland's Scotland Learns
<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/scotland-learns/>

Appendix 1

Key Guidance

Coronavirus Act 2020:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/schedule/16/part/2/enacted>

Coronavirus (COVID 19): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues – advisory note on physical distancing in early learning and childcare settings (ELC)

[Coronavirus \(COVID 19\): Advisory Sub-Group on Education and Children's Issues – advisory note on physical distancing in early learning and childcare settings \(ELC\) - gov.scot](#)

Covid-19 Framework for Decision-Making- Scotlands Route Map Through and Out of the Crisis Phase-3

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis-phase-3-update-30th-july-2020/>

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

Impact Assessment: The closure and reopening of schools as part of the COVID-19 recovery process in Scotland

[Impact Assessment: The closure and reopening of schools as part of the COVID-19 recovery process in Scotland - gov.scot](#)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on Preparing for the Start of the New School Term in August 2020

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-preparing-start-new-school-term-august-2020/>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Support for Continuity in Learning

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-support-for-continuity-in-learning/>

Children's rights and wellbeing impact assessment: The closure and reopening of schools as part of the COVID-19 recovery process in Scotland

[Children's rights and wellbeing impact assessment: The closure and reopening of schools as part of the COVID-19 recovery process in Scotland - gov.scot](#)

Coronavirus (COVID-19): shielding guidance for local authorities and local resilience partnerships

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): shielding guidance for local authorities and local resilience partnerships - gov.scot](#)

Scottish Government Coronavirus (COVID-19); Framework for Decision Making

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-further-information/>

Health Protection Scotland COVID-19 Workforce Education Information and Resources

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/workforce-educational-resources/>

Health and Safety Executive

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/news/coronavirus.htm>

National Transport Guidance Portal

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Outdoor Learning Directory

<https://outdoorlearningdirectory.com/>

Midlothian Education

Operational Guidance for Return to Midlothian Schools and ELC

August 2020

Physical Distancing in Education and Childcare Settings

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-distancing-in-education-and-childcare-settings/pages/hygiene-measures-including-ppe/>

The Correct Order for Donning and Doffing PPE

<https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-the-correct-order-for-donning-doffing-and-disposal-of-personal-protective-equipment-ppe-for-healthcare-workers-hcws-in-a-primary-care-setting/>

COVID-19 Guidance for Non-Healthcare Settings

https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2973/documents/1_covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf

Test, Trace, Isolate and Support Strategy

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-test-trace-isolate-support/>

Appendix 2

Midlothian's Route Map through and out of the crisis



Midlothian Route
Map through and o



Midlothian
routemap V13.pdf