

Education and Learning Directorate

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Dear Parent/Carer,

Return to School August 2020

Our return to school in August 2020 is set to be very different from anything we have experienced before. However, we are all very much looking forward to having all our young people back within our school building. In order to do this safely for both pupils, staff and parents/carers, we have had to make necessary changes. I hope that the following information answers some of the questions you may have and please remember to access:

<https://supportdg.dumgal.gov.uk/article/20769/Schools-and-childcare>
for more information.

What will school look like?

Scottish Government guidance states that,

‘There is no requirement for physical distancing between children of any age in schools,’

but that as a precaution,

‘secondary schools should encourage distancing where possible between young people, particularly in the senior phase.’

‘preference would always be to avoid large gatherings and crowded spaces.’

This means that for the foreseeable future there will not be:

- school organised extra-curricular clubs
- school trips & excursions
- assemblies
- joint working between classes

It is impossible for us to avoid some crossover of children

- at the start of the school day
- at the end of the school day
- during interval and lunch
- change of periods in secondary

However, guidance assures us that this is acceptable as our young people will be in the vicinity of each other for less than 15 minutes.

Adults working in our schools

It is crucial that we protect all adults working within the school and that they feel safe and comfortable within their place of work.

Adults working within the school are required to maintain 2 metres physical distance between each other. Where reasonable and practical they will also maintain this between themselves and the children.

Where adults cannot keep a 2 metre distance and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (eg. 15 minutes or more) with children, face shields/masks should be worn.

Adults working within the school environment are free to wear a face shield/mask if they feel more comfortable doing so.

At this time we will not be able to utilise the help of parents and carers within the school environment. Indeed, guidance prevents parents/carers entering the school building. We ask that if you need to speak to your child's class teacher then you phone the school office. Please be aware that if you come to the office the ladies will speak to you through the glass screen.

Return for pupils

All pupils will return to school on 12th August 2020. However, in the hope of reducing congestion at the main entrance, we have staggered the start and finish times for different age groups.

	Start time	Finish time
Primary 1 - 3	8.40 – 9am*	3.05pm*
Primary 4 - 7	8.50 – 9.10am	3.15pm
S1 - 3	8.40 – 9am	3.35pm
S4 - 6	8.50 – 9.10am	From 3.35 - 3.45pm

**These times are different for Primary 1 on 12th, 13th and 14th August. Mrs Lemon has shared these plans with parents and carers.*

These timings should allow families with children in different age groups to bring them together. On entering the school grounds **primary** children should make their way round to their external classroom doors. **Secondary** children should make their way straight up to their registration classes. Often children congregate in the foyer before the start of the school day. All seating has been removed from this area and we ask that you support us by not sending your child to school before their designated time slot.

Individual plans have been made for Nursery and Primary 1 and these have been shared with parents and carers.

We would like to welcome our **new families** to the school and ask that they come to the school office and a member of the team will show the children to their new classes.

We ask that parents and carers who are coming to collect their children at the end of the school day, please remember social distance guidelines when waiting outside of the school. We also politely request that you leave the area as soon as you have collected your child/children.

Timetable

Secondary pupils will receive their new timetables on Wednesday during registration. We will let them know their new registration classes/teachers on Monday or Tuesday and these will also be displayed as they enter the school on Wednesday. As usual, the management team will be at the front entrance to welcome our pupils back on Wednesday and support them if needed.

School transport

Our understanding is that Dumfries and Galloway Council have been in touch with families entitled to transport. Guidance we have received states that 'pupils travelling on school transport will be expected to wear a face covering unless they are exempt for medical reasons.' Children travelling on a service bus should follow current Scottish Government and Transport Scotland guidance.

Morning Intervals

Primary – the initial plan (now plan B) was to have the primary split into two 'bubbles'. We intend to maintain this within the playground by splitting our very large area in two. Children will use their external classroom doors to access these areas as usual.

Secondary – S1-3 pupils will be allowed out of class five minutes prior to interval to avoid congestion in the lunch hall. They will then have designated areas for their year groups. S4-6 pupils will follow the usual time and will also have designated areas.

Lunch Time

Primary 1-3 pupils are entitled to free school meals. For the first few weeks this will take the form of a packed lunch which will be delivered to the classrooms by our catering provider, DGFirst. If you would prefer your child to bring a home packed lunch then this is absolutely fine. Primary 4 – 7 children can also select a school or home packed lunch. The cost of a school packed lunch is £2 per day.

Secondary – We have been in touch with local businesses and they are all happy to welcome our pupils back at lunch time. Pupils must remember that when they leave the school building social distancing rules apply and the wearing of face masks is required within shops. Lunches for secondary will also cost £2 and there will be a 'Grab and Go' selection on offer. S4-6 pupils will be allowed out slightly early to avoid congestion in the lunch hall. Pupils will collect their lunch and then go to their designated area within the school or outside if they prefer.

As we know the Scottish weather is not always kind to us. During wet interval or lunchtime primary pupils will remain in their classrooms as usual. If secondary pupils are remaining in school they will go to their designated areas.

Infection Control

In accordance with guidance regular handwashing will become part of our school routine. New sanitising stations have also been installed around the school. Primary class teachers will ensure handwashing is taking place regularly. The senior management team will be on hand to encourage our secondary pupils to wash or sanitise their hands throughout the day.

Enhanced cleaning procedures have been put in place which include a focus on high use areas such as handrails and door handles. Rooms will be kept well ventilated and therefore children will be required to dress appropriately (it may be slightly cooler than usual).

Children who are unwell will be removed from class and parents will be contacted to come and collect them.

Please ensure that there is someone to collect your child quickly if they become unwell and that we have the most up-to-date emergency contact information.

Children displaying COVID-19 symptoms must remain at home as per public health guidance.

Uniform

School uniform should be worn as usual. Please remember that the ventilation of the rooms may mean that they are slightly cooler than usual.

PE

Primary – There will be no PE during the first three days of school. Thereafter, the teachers will let the children know which days they are having PE and the kit they will require to wear into school (Primary 1 arrangements are slightly different to start with). Following government guidance PE will be outdoors whenever possible.

Secondary - Following government guidance PE will be outdoors whenever possible. PE kits should be brought into school as usual and these should include suitable clothes for outdoors.

Resources

Primary

Each child can bring a maximum of one school bag to school and this will be stored on their chair or below their desk. Where possible packed lunch boxes should be kept inside school bags.

Children will not leave any personal items in school.

It isn't unusual for some of our younger boys and girls to have a little "accident" now and again. Please pack a change of clothing for your child (in their school bag) if they are in Primary 1 or 2 – just in case!

Children will be provided with all the resources they need in school. If they do choose to bring their own stationery, we will ask that they don't share items with anyone else.

Children should not bring toys to school with them.

Some children with high anxiety levels benefit / take comfort from having a small soft toy in their bag. This is fine but it should be kept in their bag unless a specific arrangement relating to additional support needs has been discussed with the class teacher.

Secondary

As usual, secondary pupils should bring their own resources (pencils, pens etc). However, spares will be available if they need them. In order to keep congestion in corridors to a minimum the lockers will not be in use for the first few weeks. We will keep the young people updated as and when this changes.

Homework

In accordance with guidance, the transfer of items between home and school has to be kept to a minimum. This means that we will be utilising the use of digital technology (as we did during lockdown) during this period. As reading books will have to be 'quarantined' before they can be used with other children, we will not be able to facilitate the constant programme of reading at home that we normally do. I know this will be disappointing to many parents but please be assured that the teaching of reading will continue in class.

Secondary – we will continue to utilise Show my Homework and digital technologies where possible.

Final note...

It is our hope that we will be able to return to our 'normal' way of doing things very quickly but whilst restrictions are in place, we need to ensure that we do everything possible to keep each other safe. The systems we have put in place will be reviewed regularly and any adjustments made communicated with parents and carers.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your anticipated support and understanding at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Andrea Macfarlane
Acting Head Teacher