

EDUCATION, LEISURE & HOUSING

Executive Director: James Wylie
Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY

Tel: (01856) 873535
Fax: (01856) 876327

Website: www.orkney.gov.uk
Email: education.leisure@orkney.gov.uk



JW/AJD

17 February 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following the First Minister announcement yesterday afternoon we received written guidance from the Scottish Government outlining, in detail, the initial stage of the phased return of pupils to nursery and school settings.

All pre-school children and pupils in P1-P3 will return to the classroom on Monday 22 February, while the children of eligible keyworkers and vulnerable families will continue to be invited to attend across primary and secondary settings. All categories of keyworker, from one to three, will remain eligible to place their children in school in the first instance. Additionally, in the case of primary settings, an exception is made for those very small schools, with 25 pupils of fewer, in rural and island communities which have the entire primary cohort in a single class. In such settings in Orkney all pupils, from P1 to P7, will be invited to attend.

There will also be a part-time return, but on a very limited basis, for senior secondary pupils - S4, S5 and S6 - to allow them to complete practical work for national qualifications. Schools will communicate directly with these pupils in respect of individual timetables for attendance.

It is important to note that, while the process of vaccinating the population continues, we must continue with all mitigating measures in schools prior to the Christmas break in the fight against Covid-19. Handwashing, enhanced cleaning and ventilation, the use of face coverings and zero tolerance to symptoms will continue. In addition, the two-metre distancing rule applying to adults working in schools and nurseries will be extended to also include secondary-aged pupils attending school and while using school transport. Physical distancing requirements in primary schools and early learning settings remain unchanged.

The First Minister's latest announcement yesterday (16 February) confirmed these details. The First Minister also outlined the Scottish Government's plans for the next phase of the gradual return to schools for P4, 5, 6 and 7 and S1-3, alongside in-person learning for colleges and universities. The intention of the Scottish Government is to review the situation on 2 March and, as long as the virus continues to be suppressed, extend further the number of pupils eligible to attend school.

Adults working in school, as well as senior phase (S4, S5 and S6) pupils attending school, will be encouraged to participate in the national programme of voluntary, at-home, Covid-19 testing twice a week. Schools are in the process of contacting those senior-phase pupils eligible to participate in the testing programme to provide more information and seek the necessary consent.

Letters will be sent out to parents and carers this week outlining the detail and implications of this latest directive by individual schools. Following this communication should you have any questions please contact the Head Teacher of your child's school directly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Wylie', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Wylie
Executive Director