

## 5 June School Staff Communication

Colleagues,

Further to my previous communication I am pleased to be able to provide some further information regarding the return to Early Years settings and schools in August.

Staff will return on or around 11 June as directed by individual Headteachers to prepare settings for the return of pupils in August and to work on the development of learning materials. You will receive direct communication from your Headteacher regarding these arrangements. School business support staff will be contacted by Business Managers.

When children return, school will not be the same as it was. Class numbers will be reduced, hygiene and social distancing measures will be in place and the school day/week will be different. This includes a blend of in-school and home learning. We continue to refine our plans based on national guidance and the logistical challenges that are unique to the Borders and will provide much more detail over the coming weeks.

The focus continues to be on ensuring the safety of all our young people and staff and delivering the best possible learning offer for every pupil.

Transport will be a significant challenge because the capacity is so reduced by the requirement to socially distance. We are exploring various options, however it will be impossible to provide transport for all pupils in the same way as pre-coronavirus. To help us to test various models of school transport operations we will shortly be sending out a link to a survey to parents which will ask if they would be willing and able to assist in dropping off and collecting their children at school.

Whilst some staff will be returning to school from next week we will not be inviting any groups of pupils to attend. Schools will however be making arrangements to support young people transitioning to secondary school or entering P1 in August. These arrangements will be managed locally by Headteachers. There may, in some circumstances, be individual pupils invited into school to collect resources or discuss important individual plans where this cannot be done in any other way.

Over the summer holidays we will continue to offer Childcare Hubs to support vulnerable children and key workers. The location of these hubs will be moved to secondary schools and will be primarily operated as summer activity hubs on our behalf by Live Borders. A new booking system will be implemented and further specific guidance will be issued.

Once pupils return in August the blended model of in-school and home learning will mean that hubs will need to continue to operate so that we can continue to support vulnerable children and those of key workers. We are developing a model which will support this requirement, which will likely result in a mini-hub in most schools.

Finally, I would like to thank you for continuing to support pupils during the last couple of months. I know it has been a significant challenge for staff to adapt practice at short notice, learn new skills and cope with restrictions set nationally on the use of certain ICT platforms.

However, for the vast majority of our children the Inspire Learning Programme has enabled our children to learn in a modern, innovative way not available in any other part of Scotland. The Council's investment in the Inspire Learning programme will continue to provide significant opportunities as we move forward.

Thank you all for your ongoing support and we will provide detailed updates as and when we can.

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Regards

Tracey Logan  
Chief Executive