

Colleagues,

You will no doubt be aware of the recent announcement by the Deputy First Minister that he hopes all pupils will be able to return to school as normal on 11 August.

It is vital to emphasise, as Mr Swinney did in the Scottish Parliament, that this will only be possible if the COVID-19 infection rate continues to reduce sufficiently and all appropriate measures can be put in place to keep pupils and staff safe.

This will be a decision for the Scottish Government to take in due course, and is not one that we will be able to make locally.

The full return of all young people to Early Years settings and all schools full time is 'Plan A' and we sincerely hope that this is possible.

However, you will be aware that over a number of weeks we have been developing our contingency plans for reopening on 11 August with a blended learning approach combining in-school and home learning. This is based, as guided by the Scottish Government, on existing restrictions being in place, specifically 2m social distancing.

Whilst we all hope that these contingency plans will not be needed, it remains vital for us to finalise this 'Plan B' in case it is required. We have been working on these extremely complex arrangements for a number of weeks now and are making very good progress.

Should the Scottish Government announce before 13 July that blended learning will be necessary, or if no announcement on the school reopening arrangements is made by that date, we will provide the detail of Plan B to staff and parents on 13 July.

In all our planning our focus is on being able to deliver learning in-school safely for pupils and staff and, as part of Plan B, a blended learning offer that supports the learning needs of every pupil and helps them to achieve their learning targets.

We will provide further updates when more information is available. Staff FAQs can be found on the staff section of our website at www.scotborders.gov.uk/staff

Regards

Tracey Logan
Chief Executive
Scottish Borders Council