

Title	Highland Schools Re-Opening Frequently Asked Questions
Audience	Parents and Carers
Version/ date	Version 1 - Updated 30 th June 2020 (Full Return)
Introduction	<p>The aim is to reopen Highland Schools on 12th August 2020</p> <p>On 21st May the Scottish Government confirmed that schools will open to children and young people from the 11th August. Since then it has been confirmed that the 10th August will be a holiday and the 11th August will be an in-service day, so schools will open from the 12th August.</p> <p>Highland Council has also issued a reopening <i>pro forma</i>, a generic risk assessment and reopening guidance for ELC settings.</p> <p>Scottish Government guidance regarding COVID may change and it is understandable that parents and carers will have questions and concerns about their child returning to school in August. In this communication, we have answered a number of frequently asked questions to seek to address those queries.</p> <p>As always, the safety and wellbeing of our children, young people, their families, and our staff is our top priority, and we hope the measures we have put in place reassure you that your child will be safe upon returning to school. At the same time, we must recognise that education provision in August 2020 will be different to before the lockdown.</p> <p>The Scottish Government guidelines still highlight the importance of reducing contact between people, including children in schools, to reduce the risk of the virus spreading.</p>

Ref.	Question	Response
Returning to School		
1.	I don't feel comfortable about sending my child to school. Will they have to attend?	<p>Highland schools are looking forward to welcoming your child back to learning and will be taking every precaution to ensure the environment is as safe as possible.</p> <p>All Highland school aged children and young people - including priority groups – will be expected to attend their school, unless they are self-isolating with their families or they are clinically vulnerable.</p>
2.	Why will school start a week earlier, and will we be given this week back at a later date? What is the rationale for this earlier start?	<p>The Scottish Government have confirmed the start date for school session 2020/21 will be standardised as 11 August across all local authorities, with pupils returning to school on Wednesday 12 August. Therefore, an amended school calendar for next session has now been agreed for Highland Council and schools will close one week early on Friday 25 June 2021. The amended school term dates are available on the Highland Council website https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/878/schools/32/school_term_dates</p>
Health and Safety		
3.	Should children who are shielding or medically vulnerable return to school in August?	<p>Further advice will be issued by the Scottish Government regarding shielding and this should be followed on return to school in August. It is not expected that clinically extremely vulnerable children attend school and they should continue to be supported at home as much as possible.</p> <p>Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A small minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.</p>

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		<p>If someone in their household is extremely clinically vulnerable (shielded), they should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to, and the child is able to understand and follow the instructions.</p>
4.	<p>What will happen if a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19</p>	<p>Where the child or staff member tests positive, the school will be advised by the Test & Protect Contact Tracing Team about who else within the school should be asked to self-isolate. The other household members of that wider group do not need to self-isolate unless the child or staff member they live with subsequently develops symptoms.</p> <p>All pupils and staff will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.</p> <p>Where the child or staff member tests negative they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.</p> <p>We understand that testing will have results within 24 hours.</p> <p>Questions about Health Protection or Test & Protect can be sent to the Health Protection Team hpt.highland@nhs.net or the Test & Protect Team high-uhb.covid-19contacttracing@nhs.net</p>
5.	<p>How will you limit the risk of infection for my child and will there be a strategy to reduce areas of frequently</p>	<p>All Highland schools are currently carrying out risk assessments ahead of re-opening in August, so that they can put in place a program of control measures to limit the risk to staff and children.</p> <p>Changes may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decluttering of classrooms • limit mixing of children • minimizing contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school

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	touched surfaces?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitizer ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered • ensuring good respiratory hygiene - promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
6.	Should my child wear a face covering, mask or other PPE?	<p>Government guidance currently states pupils should wear face coverings while using school transport.</p> <p>Staff will only wear PPE when;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a child whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their physical or intimate care needs. • a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. A face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then gloves, an apron and a face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn. <p>If you have any concerns, please speak to the head teacher at your school</p>
7.	Will there be COVID-19 testing and contact tracing in schools?	<p>When pupils return to school in August, all children eligible to attend, and members of their households, will have access to testing if they display symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).</p> <p>Questions about Health Protection or Test & Protect can be sent to the Health Protection Team hpt.highland@nhs.net or the Test & Protect Team high-uhb.covid-19contacttracing@nhs.net</p>
8.	What extra training will be provided to HTs to allow them to carry out detailed risk assessments	<p>Head Teachers are already experienced in preparing risk assessments. Generic assessments on the management of COVID related risks will also be available for use within schools.</p> <p>Head Teachers are also receiving additional support and advice on COVID related risks from the Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing department.</p>

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9.	Will clear direction be given to parents about what symptoms pupils should be kept at home with if they are ill?	<p>The following link can be used for advice regarding COVID symptoms:</p> <p>https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19</p> <p>Parents should follow previous Highland Council advice regarding all other medical conditions.</p>
10.	My child has a condition (eg.minor allergies, a vulnerability to colds, etc) that often result in symptoms that are similar to COVID-19. Will they be sent home, and/or should I ask for weekly COVID-19 testing for them (to reassure others)?	<p>As a parent it is your responsibility to ensure your child is not presenting any COVID symptoms before attending school.</p> <p>If a child develops symptoms of the coronavirus during the school day, they will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days and advised to book a test.</p> <p>Using the “test, trace, isolate, support strategy” a test will be available, and the results will be delivered rapidly.</p> <p>Questions about Health Protection or Test & Protect can be sent to the Health Protection Team hpt.highland@nhs.net or the Test & Protect Team high-uhb.covid-19contacttracing@nhs.net</p>
11.	How can I look after my child’s mental health and well-being?	<p>Guidance for parents and carers on looking after the mental health and well-being of children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak can be found using the following link:</p> <p>https://sites.google.com/millburnacademy.org.uk/highlanddigitalschoolshub/home</p>

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12.	What will schools do to help children feel safe and secure in school and how will disruptive behaviour, including bullying or deliberate coughing over others be dealt with?	<p>Highland Council's Promoting Positive Behaviour policy document will continue to be supported in schools.</p> <p>In addition to the above, Educational Psychologists have a role in promoting positive relationships across Highland.</p>
13.	What additional cleaning practices will be in place in school?	<p>The Scottish Government guidelines recommend regular and enhanced cleaning of surfaces and we are already looking at how to expand the existing school cleaning regime.</p> <p>The Council's Cleaning & Facilities Management Service adheres to the guidance issued by Health Protection Scotland.</p> <p>https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/web-resources-container/covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings/</p> <p>Regular hand washing will continue to be crucial and teachers will support pupils to follow the advice on this.</p>
Transport and Drop off/Collection		
14.	Will school transport still be available for	We are working with our Home to School Transport providers to look at how the guidance can be implemented to ensure that those pupils returning can do so in a safe manner.

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	children with an existing entitlement and how will bus companies or taxis manage social distancing?	<p>Providers are currently undertaking risk assessments to ensure infection control measures are in place.</p> <p>Government guidance currently states pupils should wear face coverings while using school transport. Face coverings should be provided by parents/carers.</p> <p>As an alternative to public transport or using private vehicles, Highland Council is actively encouraging parents and carers to continue walking, cycling and scooting (where possible).</p> <p>Please refer to the Highland Council website https://www.highland.gov.uk/coronavirus for the latest updates.</p>
15.	Will the school day start and end at the same time?	We anticipate schools returning under normal start and finish times. Should there be a change to these times, schools will clearly communicate these arrangements with parents before the school returns.
16.	How will I drop off and collect my child?	Further details on the arrangements will be sent to parents via the school's normal communication channels
17.	Usually someone else collects my child from school /ELC as I work, can someone from another household collect my child?	Refer to current Scottish Government guidance.

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Classes/Staffing		
18.	Will my child be taught by their usual teacher?	Schools cannot guarantee this as a number of staff may potentially be shielding, but the aim will be to have at least one adult who will be familiar with the children in each class and this may be the teacher or other staff member.
Lunch Arrangements		
19.	Will my child get a hot meal or a packed lunch?	Highland Council Catering Services are currently working with schools. Further details on the arrangements will be sent to parents via the school's normal communication channels.
20.	What should I do if I think I might be eligible for Free School Meals?	Please visit our website at www.highland.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals where you can apply on line and will receive an instant decision on your eligibility. If you are experiencing any problems with applying online please email the team with your full name, national insurance number and the child's name and date of birth at welfare.support@highland.gov.uk or phone 0800 090 1004. Calls are free from landline and mobile phones.
Curriculum		
21.	Can parents opt to continue home learning, and will they get support with home school materials for this?	Unless there are shielding considerations, all pupils are expected to return to school.
22.	Education Resources are available on-line and this link also includes	All schools are being supported with online resources. The highland digital hub can be accessed using the following link: https://sites.google.com/millburnacademy.org.uk/highlanddigitalschoolshub/home

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	resources for adults and children with additional needs and learning difficulties?	
Clubs and Hubs		
23.	Will Breakfast Clubs and After School Clubs be open?	Breakfast Clubs and After School Clubs are not expected to be in operation initially.
24.	Will hubs be available for children of key workers, or parents who need to work during the summer holidays?	<p>Highland Council will continue to offer a service over the Summer for Key Workers Category 1 who have no access to childcare in order to undertake their critical work.</p> <p>Hubs will operate from 6th July to 6th August, Monday to Thursday 8am to 6pm, in the following locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Newton Park Primary School Wick · Dingwall Academy · Millburn Academy · Inverness Royal Academy · Nairn Academy · Aviemore Primary School · Lochaber High School · Ullapool High School

