



## **Re-opening Guidance to Parents and Pupils**

We are looking forward to welcoming your child back to full time learning. It is important our young people are able to see their friends and benefit from the learning, care and support that our school provides. The need to reconnect to normal patterns and routines in children's lives will be important and reassuring to them.

The following procedures have been developed to make this return to school as safe as possible for all pupils and staff taking the best account we can of Scottish Government guidelines. Our return to school will not therefore be a return entirely to 'normality'. We must remain vigilant and continue to manage the risks of COVID-19 by working together to ensure that all understand the advice and follow it at all times.

The school has a full risk assessment in place that covers all aspects of school life which will be reviewed regularly and as circumstances change.

This document is to ensure that you as parents understand what measures are being put in place, and can support us in helping to make them work.

### **Returning to School**

All Highland school aged pupils will be expected to attend school, unless they are medically vulnerable in which case they should follow medical advice. There will be no online provision.

Acknowledging the latest Scottish Government announcement about the return of pupils to school, and having met with our Parent Council I have decided to adopt a phased return to school for our pupils next week. This will be as follows:

- S1/S2 will start school on Wednesday 12 August
- S3 will start school on Thursday 13 August
- S4/S5/S6 will start school on Friday 14 August

This will allow us to ensure that our young people will fully understand the additional procedures in order to keep the school as safe as possible. All pupils will have these new practices explained carefully as part of their induction on return to school to ensure that everyone knows and understands the ways in which we must change our behaviour to keep everyone safe from the risk of infection.

### **Good Hygiene Practices**

It will be the responsibility of every individual in the school to observe good hygiene practice to minimise the risk of infection. There will be appropriate signage around the school to support the measures in place.

Pupils and staff should avoid touching their faces including mouth, eyes and nose. Pupils and staff must use a tissue or elbow to cough or sneeze, and then put tissues straight into the bin. Pupils are encouraged to carry their own tissues.



Hand sanitisers will be available at all entry/exit points to the school and all staff and pupils should use these at the start and end of each day and at the start and end of break and lunch time should they leave the building. Pupils may carry their own sanitiser also.

Adequately stocked handwashing facilities will be available in all toilets. Pupils will be directed to wash hands for 20 seconds and dry thoroughly after using the toilet. Pupils should **not** gather in the toilet for social reasons.

School dress code should be worn as normal.

An enhanced cleaning regime is in place which ensures regular (at least twice daily) cleaning of commonly touched objects and surfaces e.g. desks, handles, dining tables, shared technology surfaces etc. Doors (other than fire doors) will be wedged open, where appropriate, to reduce touchpoints.

The scientific advice is that physical distancing between young people in secondary schools is not required to ensure a safe return to schools. As a precautionary approach however, distancing will be encouraged between pupils, particularly indoors – and the school will be encouraging young people not to crowd together or touch their peers.

### **Classroom Practices**

At the start of lessons pupils should not line up outside classrooms, but move straight into the class and go immediately to their own seat, not touching other desks or surfaces en route.

Pupils will sanitise hands on entering and leaving every classroom. Sanitising stations will be set up at each class entrance. Pupils may carry their own hand sanitiser.

Pupils will wipe down their own desk/chair/surfaces before leaving a classroom. Equipment to do this will be provided in every classroom.

Two metre physical distancing between staff members and between staff and pupils must be maintained. Where staff cannot keep 2m distance and are interacting face-to-face for a sustained period (about 15 minutes or more), face coverings may be worn. Staff will mainly teach from the front of the classroom to maintain the 2 metre distance from pupils that is advisable.

Cleaning regimes will be in place for specialist equipment in practical subjects. Separate Risk Assessments are in place for the Enhanced Provision Base and for pupils with ASN who require daily support.

It is crucial that students come to school fully equipped and ready to learn. As it is no longer practical to ask to borrow equipment from friends or members of staff if an item is forgotten, students should bring to school pens, pencils, eraser, ruler and a fully charged Chromebook. Lending or sharing of equipment will not be possible. Pupils should keep bags on the floor and not on their desks or worktops. Pupils can take books and other resources home, although unnecessary resource sharing including textbooks, will be avoided.

Wherever it is safe to do so, doors and windows will be kept open to increase natural ventilation and also help to reduce contact with door handles. Pupils to wear appropriate clothing to allow for this as jackets to be removed as usual when in class.



Pupils will be seated in classrooms side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face. As previously, pupils must always sit in their designated seat in class and should not move out of their seat unless they have permission to do so. Where young people need to move about within the classroom to perform activities this will be organised by the teacher to minimise contact.

### **After School and Lunchtime Clubs**

These are important for wider health and development of children and will resume when possible to make arrangements to do this according to the guidelines. More details will follow.

### **Moving Around the School**

Passing briefly in the corridor or playground is considered low risk. Pupils should avoid unnecessary touching of stair rails, walls and door handles when moving between classes.

With the exception of S1, pupils can go offsite for lunch. If they do so they must sanitise hands on entering and leaving the school and follow the rules when they are in the community, for example wearing a face covering when entering a shop. If pupils go home for lunch they should wash their hands on entering, and again on leaving, their homes.

### **Lunch and Break Arrangements**

The canteen will offer a mixture of hot meals as well as 'Grab and Go' meals. Menus will be posted around the school building and pupils can pre-order by filling in slips. Pupils must not share drinks bottles, food, cutlery or plates and cups etc.

Pupils will be able to top up their accounts in school but again, to avoid congestion in these areas, we would strongly advise you to top up online. However please note that it takes a day or two for money topped up online to appear on account. Please see the Highland Council [school meals web pages](#), or email [SchoolMeals.OnlinePayments@highland.gov.uk](mailto:SchoolMeals.OnlinePayments@highland.gov.uk).

Pupils are very much encouraged to bring their own refillable water bottle to school. Water fountains can be used for filling bottles ONLY, not for drinking from, and hand sanitiser should be used before filling a bottle.

Free school meals are available for all those eligible – you can check eligibility (for a clothing grant also) and apply online for these here: [https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/899/schools - grants and benefits/10/free school meals and assistance with clothing](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/899/schools_-_grants_and_benefits/10/free_school_meals_and_assistance_with_clothing)

Please remember that you must reapply each year for Free School Meals.

Pupils should wait outside until 8.40am on arrival at school, when they can enter the school, sanitising their hands on entry and begin to move towards their P1 class on hearing the early notice bell.

Car-sharing with children and young people of other households is discouraged. Consumption and sharing of food on school transport will not be allowed.

If a pupil travels by taxi, they should follow the advice of the driver, including sitting in the back-left hand seat of the car when travelling alone.

### **Visitors to School**

Parents or other adults should not enter school buildings unless by appointment and where a virtual meeting or phone call is not possible.



Adult visitors to schools will be strictly limited only to those that are necessary to support children and young people or the running of the school.

### **PPE and other Protective Barrier Measures**

Children are not required to wear face coverings in the school environment. Pupils may however find that some school staff will be wearing a mask for a number of reasons e.g. if it is not possible for them to maintain 2m distance.

Anyone (whether pupil or staff) wishing to wear a face covering in school can do so, and pupils travelling to school by bus must wear a face covering. Evidence suggests that face coverings do not provide significant protection for the wearer, rather they primarily reduce the risk of transmission and help suppress the virus.

No PPE is required when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom or school settings. Where the [need for PPE](#) for staff [has been identified](#) (eg for treating First Aid issues) it will be readily available and provided.

Risk assessments for children and young people with more complex needs or for those in the Enhanced provision base are in place and may include the utilisation of PPE.

### **Suspected COVID-19**

The whole school community should be vigilant for the symptoms of COVID-19. The most common symptoms are:

*New continuous cough;*  
*fever/high temperature;*  
*loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste (anosmia).*

It is essential that people do not attend school if symptomatic, but instead self-isolate (along with their household) and follow guidance on NHS Inform and from Test and Protect. As a parent it is your responsibility to ensure your child is not presenting any COVID symptoms before attending school. All children, young people and staff must inform a member of staff if they feel unwell with symptoms of COVID-19.

If a child develops symptoms of the coronavirus during the school day, they will be kept in an isolated environment until they can be collected and taken home. A responsible adult will be there to support an affected pupil. They should wear a facemask for this period and staff assisting them will have full PPE.

If the affected pupil has mild symptoms, and is over the age of 16, they should go home as soon as they notice symptoms and follow the guidance for households with possible coronavirus infection including testing and self-isolation. They should then self-isolate for 10 days and book a test. Using the "test, trace, isolate, support strategy" a test will be available to all pupils and staff necessary, and the results will be delivered rapidly.

### **Positive Testing for COVID-19**

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.

Where the child or staff member tests negative they can return to their setting and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.

Questions about Health Protection or Test & Protect can be sent to the Health Protection Team [hpt.highland@nhs.net](mailto:hpt.highland@nhs.net) or the Test & Protect Team [high-uhb.covid-19contacttracing@nhs.net](mailto:high-uhb.covid-19contacttracing@nhs.net)

### **Special considerations for certain groups**

Children, young people and staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable (shielding) will be able to return to school in August, unless given advice from a GP or healthcare provider not to, and can follow the same guidance as the rest of Scotland.

### **Support for children and young people with Additional Support Needs**

Where there is a need for staff to work in close proximity with children and young people staff should wear a face covering or PPE as appropriate, and regularly wash their hands before and after contact.

Individual risk assessment processes are in place to support pupils with more complex needs.

### **Supporting the wellbeing of pupils**

Balancing efforts to address lost learning with children and young people's social and emotional needs will be a priority.

The psychological impact of the outbreak is likely to have had social, emotional and developmental effects on some children and young people and, consequently, on achievement. Many pupils may experience anxiety about the transition from home to returning to school but also many of them will have enjoyed the experience of spending more time at home. Some may need additional time and support to re-adjust to the school environment. Similarly, school staff have been facing significant pressure; support for their mental health and wellbeing is essential both for them and for the social and emotional wellbeing of their pupils.

All staff including the school's Guidance Team, CSWs, Learning Support Team, Counselling Services, Educational Psychology services and school nurse will be working to support pupils in their return to school.