

Dear Parents and Carers,

Following a very successful return of our children and young people to schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) facilities across Midlothian in August, it is now essential for us to finalise and share contingency arrangements in case they are required at any point in the future.

Our school Contingency Plans have been completed and reflect scenarios that may occur as we continue to operate under COVID restrictions and National Guidance for schools.

I am sure you will understand that the exact circumstances that would necessitate the implementation of the Contingency Plan of a single school, a locality, or across the whole of Midlothian, and any such decisions would be taken jointly with the relevant partners eg NHS and Scottish Government. These plans have however been developed based on a requirement for full-time education for all learners with a blend of in-school and in-home learning where possible, with in-school learning being the main aspiration.

If a 'local lockdown' for schools is imposed by Scottish Government/ Health Protection Team (HPT) it also cannot be assumed that these contingency arrangements will be required, as it will depend on the extent or type of restrictions imposed.

The focus in developing these contingency plans has been to ensure that learning provision, both in-school and in-home, meets the needs of every pupil and that they are supported individually in a way that helps them to achieve their learning targets and prepare them for the future.

Our absolute priority continues to be the safety of our pupils and staff.

Contingency Planning for Cornbank Primary School and ELC setting:

Scenario 1

Due to an outbreak (confirmed by the HPT), the school has to close a class or stage or in an ELC setting you have to close a room or part of a room

OR

Due to there being insufficient staff, the school has to close a class or stage or in an ELC setting there being insufficient staff for the room or cohort group

We will follow all guidance and procedures as instructed by the Health Protection Team and Midlothian Council.

We will phone all families who are affected by the situation. We will also communicate with parents and carers through email as well as posting a Tweet alert to check your emails. We will continue to keep you up to date with the situation and share as much information as possible.

During the closure of a class or ELC cohort, in-home learning activities will be provided for all children. Primary 1 to Primary 7 pupils all have access to their Google Classroom and learning tasks will be posted on these daily. A member of the teaching team will be checking in with the class and giving daily feedback. Please check you are able to access your child's Google classroom from home and get in contact with us if you are having any difficulties. There is information already in the classroom about the year ahead as well as home learning tasks.

Our ELC children will have access to in-home learning activities through our closed Twitter page.

We will be aiming to make phone contact with all families through the period of closure and offering support for learning, technology, food provisions as well as emotional support. If you have any concerns or feel that you may need additional support during a potential closure, please do not hesitate to get in contact with us now.

Scenario 2

Due to a significant outbreak (confirmed by the HPT), there is a FULL closure of the school or ELC setting

OR

Due to there being insufficient staff, the whole school or ELC setting needs to close

Similar to scenario 1, we will follow all guidance and procedures as instructed by the Health and Protect Team (HPT) and Midlothian Council, if there is the need to close the school and ELC setting.

We will provide ongoing communication to parents and carers via email and our school website, keeping you up to date with the current situation and expected return dates to school.

If we are required to close the whole school and ELC setting, our contingency plan involves providing daily, in-home learning activities for all classes through our Google Classrooms and our ELC Twitter page.

Wherever possible, children and young people will be in school, however this is only possible where the pupil roll, physical capacity of buildings and staffing capacity is able to accommodate this safely.

Blended Learning

Over and above the above scenarios, if the Scottish Government was to announce that social distancing measures needed to be put back in to place for young children, we may need to consider a blended learning experience, where children are in school part of the week, and learn at home for the rest of the week.

Digital Devices to Support Learning

The Scottish Government have supported our own efforts to ensure that all young people have access to a device and internet connectivity to access learning online. This includes access for every child in a household. If your family require support, or if your circumstances change at any time, please contact your school directly.

Enhanced Provisions

Provisions will try wherever possible to be open Monday to Friday as normal. Staff will be equipped with enhanced PPE as required to ensure that Midlothian Council can continue to support our most vulnerable children and young people. Where children that would have accessed an enhanced provision cannot be in setting staff will be in regular contact with

parents / carers and appropriate risk assessments will be undertaken to ensure the child's safety.

Early Learning and Childcare

Provision of ELC face to face, will be a priority due to the age and developmental needs of younger children and to support childcare.

This may be for a reduced number of hours over the week.

Childcare

We understand that in the event of a Contingency Plan being implemented, this may pose a difficulty for some parents and carers in relation to their work commitments. We recommend therefore that you make your employer aware of the potential need for such arrangements, which will only be put into action when absolutely necessary.

The exact arrangements will depend on the individual circumstances requiring the contingency arrangements to be put in place.

Whilst it is not currently a requirement, it may be that Scottish Government requires local authorities to provide critical childcare in the event of a further 'lockdown'. In order for us to be prepared for that, we will shortly be sending you a survey to support the school to know who Category 1 key workers are.

Free School Meals

If any Contingency Plans are put into practice, we will continue to provide BACS payments for those P4-7 families whose household income has been assessed and an award made in respect of Free School Meals. BACS does not include the universal provision in ELC and P1-3, however anyone else in need of support will also be able to apply for help to feed their children when they are not in school. The authority will always fulfil its duty to provide a free school meal.

Should contingency arrangements be required at any time we will of course ensure that parents, carers are fully informed of the arrangements, and that all necessary support is in place.

Educational Psychology Helpline

The Educational Psychology Helpline will cease on 29th October 2020 unless contingency plans are implemented.

If you have any concerns or questions about any of the above information please do not hesitate to contact the school in the first instance.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Laura Cameron
Head Teacher