

**Tel:** 0300 300 0300  
**My Ref:** SQ/KO  
**Your Ref:**  
**Contact:** Steven Quinn  
**E-mail:** [steven.quinn@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:steven.quinn@renfrewshire.gov.uk)  
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Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this letter finds you well and you and your family are enjoying the summer break, even although holiday time may feel very different this year.

Following the First Minister's announcement yesterday, Thursday 30 July, I am delighted to confirm that Renfrewshire schools and nurseries will return full time for all children and young people from Wednesday 12 August. On behalf of all our school and nursery teams I want to say how much we are looking forward to welcoming your children back.

I am very aware that the last few months have been challenging for children, young people and parents – and once again I would like to thank you for your patience, flexibility and understanding during the period children and young people were asked to learn from home. I am sincerely grateful for your ongoing help and support.

Although this year's return to school or nursery will look and feel different, our aim is to welcome everyone back safely and to quickly settle back. Our single biggest priority has been to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of all children, young people and staff, and we are following national guidance to achieve that with new measures being put in place.

We know families will have different experiences of lockdown and I want to assure you that we are here to provide support. There will be a special focus this school and nursery year on health and wellbeing across the curriculum for all children and young people. This will include understanding experiences of lockdown, helping children and young people to readjust and working out where extra support in terms of learning may be required. More information can be provided from your school or nursery on the range of support available.

### **New term return dates**

Monday 10 and Tuesday 11 of August will be in-service days for school and nursery teams. Children and young people will return **from Wednesday 12 August on a phased basis**. This will support the transition and give everyone the opportunity to be welcomed back safely. All children and young people will be back by Friday 14 August and will be full-time from then on. For a small number of children and young people with specific additional support needs, an individual plan may be required to support a return to school or nursery. Where this is the case, the school or nursery will be in touch directly to discuss this with you in more detail.

The arrangements for the first week are as follows:

- **Nurseries** (council-run early learning childcare centres and classes).
  - From Wednesday 12 August – children receiving an additional year at nursery and four-year olds
  - From Thursday 13 August – three-year olds (in addition to children above)
  - From Friday 14 August – under three year olds who have been allocated a place to start in August (in addition to above)

*Private partner nurseries will share their plans for return directly with parents.*
- **Riverbrae and Mary Russell schools**
  - Wednesday 12 August – Primary pupils return to school
  - Thursday 13 August – Secondary pupils return, meaning all pupils are back
- **Primary schools**
  - Wednesday 12 August - P1 and P7 return
  - Thursday 13 August - P2, P3 and P4 return to school (in addition to P1 and P7 above)
  - Friday 14 August - P5 and P6 return to school, meaning all pupils are back
- **Secondary schools**
  - Wednesday 12 August - S1 and S6 return to school
  - Thursday 13 August - S4 and S5 return to school (in addition to S1 and S6 above)
  - Friday 14 August - S2 & S3 return to school, meaning all pupils are back

You should assume that it will be the normal start and finish time for your child(ren). However, where schools and nurseries are changing start and finish times to support transition, they will be in touch directly.

If your child(ren) receives home to school transport, this will run as normal. Parent guidance on procedures for travelling on this transport will be sent to parents / carers before the school term.

### **New measures to support return**

A range of measures are in place within each of our schools and nurseries in line with Government guidance. I want to reassure you that while safety is the priority, we will do everything we can to reduce the impact of this on the school or nursery day and your child's learning experience. Each school and nursery are different, and your establishment will contact you about any specific requirements, but there are standard measures in place for everyone:

- Robust hygiene and cleaning procedures have been introduced across all nurseries and schools. This includes regular hand washing

and cleaning surfaces and equipment throughout the day. All nurseries and schools will be cleaned at the end of the school day.

- On arrival into school or nursery, children will wash their hands before they settle into the centre, classroom or learning space. We also ask that children and young people wash their hands before they leave home in the morning. In secondary schools, this will involve the use of hand sanitisers.
- As per Government guidance, children and young people do not have to physically distance while in nursery, school or on school transport. However, we will encourage physical distancing where possible to further minimise any risk. In addition, we will avoid bringing children and young people together in large groups such as school events or assemblies. Physical distancing will be in place between staff and between staff, children and young people where possible. Visitors coming into nurseries and schools will also be restricted.
- Lunch times may be staggered, where possible, to reduce children and young people queuing in large numbers. During August, we will serve packed lunches with the aim of introducing hot meals in September once schools and nurseries have established routines in place. Children and young people can bring their own packed lunch.
- If arriving to school or nursery by car, please park as far away as possible from the building to avoid congestion. If you can, please consider walking or taking another form of active travel.
- Home to school transport provided by the council will continue as normal for eligible children and young people. They do not have to be distanced and will not need to wear face coverings. However, no food or drink should be consumed while on a school bus. For children and young people travelling on public transport, please follow Scottish Government guidance on face coverings and physical distancing.
- Please follow your school's decision on uniforms as normal. This should have been shared with you in June. If you are in doubt about arrangements, please contact the school or visit the website.
- Some restrictions will be in place around personal belongings. Children at nursery should continue to bring a change of clothing but please avoid bringing toys from home where possible. Children and young people may bring in their own pencil cases and other materials for their own use as normal. We will ask that school bags are kept on the floor.

I hope this provides you with some confidence that our planning is thorough, and we are ready to welcome our school and nursery community back safely. We are committed to balancing these measures with getting the learning environment as close to normal as we can. In that regard our priorities remain the same as ever – to address inequality, improve literacy and numeracy, and improve attainment and outcomes for all children in Renfrewshire, and help close the poverty-related attainment gap.

You will undoubtedly have questions that I have not been able to address fully in this letter and I would like to point you to a package of information that is this available for parents and carers on our website at [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools) - including detailed Frequently Asked Questions. Here you will also find the National Guidance for schools and nurseries that we are following. Please also be assured that you will hear directly from your school before the return date if they need to share any further information with you.

I would again like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for all you have done to support your child's learning over the past four months. I also wish to thank our school and nursery staff and wider council teams who have worked tirelessly to put plans in place while reacting to a regularly-changing situation.

Please keep safe and enjoy the remainder of the summer break and I look forward to seeing you in the new school year.

Yours sincerely



Steven Quinn  
Director of Children's Services