
**EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S
SERVICES**

Carrie Lindsay

Your Ref
Our Ref: CL/CG

11 November 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope this message finds you and your family well. It has been some time since I wrote to you, but I know that schools have been communicating with you directly to keep you updated on any advice to keep us all safe.

Following the announcement by the First Minister yesterday (Tuesday) that Fife is to move to level 3, I thought it would be a good time to share some of the new guidance and answer some questions which have been raised recently by parents.

As part of the ongoing measures to try to keep our schools safe, open and welcoming we are asking all parents and carers to be mindful of the part you play in helping us to do that. We need you to keep reminding your children and young people at home too of the need to stick with it.

We appreciate the efforts you have all made so far, but with cases on the rise in Fife it is important that we all do everything we can to follow the FACTS.

Face coverings – parents should make sure they are wearing a face covering at all times in or near school grounds, when dropping off or picking up children. All children and young people should wear face coverings on school transport. From Friday 13 November, as we move into Level 3, all S4-S6 (Senior Phase) pupils, and staff teaching these classes, will need to wear a face covering in class. In secondary schools everyone needs to wear a face covering when moving around the school. There are still exemptions in place for pupils and staff who can't wear a mask for physical, emotional or behavioural reasons. We know that staff and pupils wearing face coverings can make communication difficult for some and we have been piloting see through masks or visors which will be able to be used in certain circumstances.

Avoid crowded places – if you don't have to come right up to the school gates, try dropping off and picking up your child at a pre-arranged point, slightly away from the

school gates; if waiting in the playground, keep at least 2 metres from other adults and wear a face covering.

Clean your hands regularly – it's easy for everyone to get more relaxed around hand washing and sanitising but it's more important now than ever that we remind our children to keep at it to help prevent the spread of germs.

Two metre distance – make sure your child has a good idea of just how far two metres is. Outside the classroom and out with their own “bubbles” we want our younger children to know how far they should stay back from others. Our older children and young people need to try to keep that distance from ALL adults in the school wherever possible.

Self-isolate and book a test if you have symptoms - it is really important to get tested if you or your children have symptoms. Remember that if someone in the household has symptoms everyone in the household should self-isolate until the results of the test come back. You shouldn't send your children to school if anyone in the household is awaiting test results.

Further Information

I also wanted to provide a little more information on a few issues which have been raised with us by parents over the last few weeks.

We need to make sure that our classes are well ventilated to help minimise the risk of infection. This doesn't mean that windows and doors need to be wide open all of the time. We have been working closely with all our schools to look at the individual needs of each school, to create a balance which reduces the chance of infection while maintaining indoor temperatures that are suitable to maintain comfort, health and wellbeing, and to promote effective learning and teaching.

Your school will have individual arrangements, but most will have asked you to make sure that your children come to school with an extra layer of clothing as temperatures may be lower than usual. At breaks and lunchtime our children, as always, need suitable clothing to be outdoors, appropriate for the weather in Scotland.

Moving into level 3 tells us that we need to take even greater care in following the FACTS advice and making sure that we do everything we can to keep each other safe. In level 3 schools will stay open. However, where there is a COVID incident or cluster then groups of children, classes, year groups or whole schools may have to self-isolate or not attend school, on the advice of Public Health, as has been the case in level 2.

We've had a number of questions about why one child in a family needs to self-isolate but the other one doesn't. Hopefully I can try to explain that.

Whenever we find out a pupil or member of staff has tested positive for Covid we meet with colleagues from NHS Fife and Public Health to discuss what needs to happen now. We look carefully at what the Covid positive person (the case) has been doing and where they went during the days when they may have been infectious. Every pupil or staff member who may have been close enough to the “case” in that time is then classed as a potential “contact”. Anyone who is classed as a contact then needs to self-isolate. If your child is in a class where there is a positive “case” and your child has been near to “the case” then your child will be asked to self-isolate as they are classed as a “contact”.

Self-isolation means that they need to stay at home and away from others in the household too, if they can. Other people in your home don't need to self-isolate as long as your child (the contact) continues to have no symptoms. However, if any of you start to show symptoms you must all isolate and book a test. Everyone in the household needs to isolate immediately. Please don't send your children to school if someone in the household is awaiting the results of a Covid test.

The information that we use to inform parents what needs to happen, and why, explains what the right advice for your children at that time is. Our Public Health colleagues are working hard with us to minimise the disruption to our children and young people attending school while making sure that we take every measure possible to us that will stop an incident or outbreak spreading more widely.

We know that COVID 19 is likely to be with us for some time, until a vaccine is effective in limiting the spread and protecting our most vulnerable in society. With that knowledge we want to ensure that our children can continue to learn and socialise with their friends so that their lives can be affected as little as possible in these strange times.

I'd like to thank you for working with us to support all of our children and young people in the best way possible, allowing them to develop and flourish within the parameters of this current pandemic.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carrie Lindsay".

Carrie Lindsay
Executive Director (Education & Children's Services)