

**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

Thank you for your continued patience and support which is allowing our early years centres, schools and central teams to work towards the delivery of a blended model of learning for our children and young people when they return in August.

The health, safety and wellbeing of our children and staff is our first and highest priority. In order to ensure this, and to comply with Scottish Government guidance, a model of blended learning will be implemented with children spending part of the week in their school or nursery and part at home. An assessment of the space available in each building has been conducted to make sure we use all the available space and resource to help us deliver this.

I am now in a position to offer further detail on what this will look like across all stages of learning.

### **Early Years Centres and Early Learning Classes**

We are still moving forward with our plan to provide children in Renfrewshire with 1140 hours of fully funded early learning and childcare where we have the capacity to do so. However, we will not be in a position to deliver this in August given the current challenges that we face.

In August, we will offer a blended learning model for early years, which will be either half days or some full day placements. Further guidance from the Scottish Government will be published next week and this will help us to finalise our plans.

Private partner providers will be in touch with parents directly to offer details of what provision they are able to offer. We will work with our partners to support them where possible.

### **Primary Schools**

From August, we will adopt a model where half of the children will come into school on a Monday and Tuesday and the other half will attend on a Thursday and Friday. Wednesdays will be used for enhanced cleaning and to allow all teachers to have their contractual non class contact time to prepare lessons and support pupils with remote learning.

## Secondary Schools

In order to enable the delivery of the broadest range of curriculum options, each secondary school has been working towards a model to maximise the amount of time in school for each young person. To ensure compliance with government guidance, use of classroom space and ways of reducing movement between classrooms have been assessed. These constraints mean new timetable designs have been developed in order to deliver five days of face to face teaching for pupils across each two-week period.

The pattern of days that pupils will attend may vary across each secondary school and this is because of transport arrangements and the different layouts and space available in each school. All young people will have 10 blocks of two and half hours face to face teaching each fortnight.

### Which Days will my Child be in School?

The blended model being adopted varies between early learning, primary and secondary schools in order to meet the unique context and requirements of each age and stage of learning. To support family childcare arrangements, wherever it is possible, siblings will be in school at the same time. However, this may not be achievable in all circumstances.

Starting and finishing times will be staggered to allow children to arrive and leave safely at the end of the day. Schools will notify parents directly of specific times for your child, but school days will run approximately from 9am until 3pm. Schools will contact you directly on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June with details of the days that your child will be in school.

### Blended Learning

With smaller class sizes in almost all cases, teachers and support staff will have the opportunity to work more intensely with children and be able to set appropriate tasks to be done at home.

There will be a level of remote support for children across Renfrewshire when they are not in school but this will not necessarily be with their class teacher who will be in class teaching other groups of pupils. However, there will be staff available to offer a level of support on the days that children are not in school.

We are committed to ensuring that all children have the opportunity to extend and reinforce their learning on the days they are not in school.

Greater detail of how this will work in practice will be given by your child's school when they return in August.

## **Enhanced Transition for Children with Additional Support Needs**

It is recognised that nurturing wellbeing will be an important requirement for all children and young people as they return to school in August. Enhanced arrangements for those with additional support needs will be established in each school and early years centre. This will further support children to make the move back to school in as successful and positive a way as possible.

Special consideration will be given to children and young people needing specialist support in Riverbrae and Mary Russell schools or in mainstream settings. Staff will work with families to ensure this support is appropriate.

## **Transport to School**

We are continuing to work in partnership with Strathclyde Passenger Transport and bus contractors to understand and agree safe protocols, in line with government guidance, for children who come to school in buses and taxis. At this stage, we are not in a position to offer clarity in what this will look like in practice. I will, however, ensure you are updated as soon as possible.

I understand that you may wish, where you are able, to bring your child to school and this would be welcomed.

## **Essential Childcare for Key Workers**

We will continue to put in place emergency childcare provision for children of key workers in line with government advice. This, unfortunately, can only be made available to families who have exhausted all other alternatives and where both parents are key workers and are unable to work from home or in the case of a single parent, that they fit this criteria.

We will also be appealing to employers to work with their employees to consider flexible working patterns to enable parents to care for their children on the days they are not in school.

## **Summer Childcare**

Over the period of school holidays in the summer, childcare provision for the families of key workers will be available from hubs which will be established in three broad geographical areas. There will also be provision for children with complex additional support needs with appropriate supports in place. An online application process with greater detail is now in place to manage the registration process. This can be found at <https://arcg.is/10nOyz>

## Childcare in August

On the days that children are not in school, childcare for children of key workers will be made available, in line with government advice. This provision will also be made available in broad geographical areas as it will not be possible for this to take place in our school buildings where we will try to maximise capacity to allow as many children to come to school as possible. Greater detail along with an application process will become available over the summer and I will ensure all parents are kept informed.

## Returning to School in August

The government have decided on a date that all schools throughout the country should return and for our children they will begin to return from Wednesday the 12<sup>th</sup> August. Teachers and support staff will return before this date. This requires some additional planning to ensure all children have an opportunity to be in school in the first week and that they are able to return in a phased and safe manner.

Further details from your child's school detailing the day(s) that your child will come to school in the first week will be sent to you along with their school days thereafter in a correspondence on 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

I appreciate this is a lot of information, however, I hope that this update offers you some further reassurance and detail on the work that is taking place to welcome our children and staff back into a safe environment.

There is also a detailed schools and nurseries Q&A on our website which is regularly updated – please check that for more information at [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus-schools).

Once again, my thanks go to you all for your support in recent months. I hope you and your family can enjoy the summer and look forward to a new start or a return to school in August. All our schools and nurseries very much look forward to welcoming your children back.

Yours sincerely



Steven Quinn  
Director of Children's Services