

Childcare and support for children, young people and families

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This section relates to childcare and support available as schools and Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings reopen.

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Childcare is a huge concern if children are part-time in school. What can the Council do to help?

We are currently engaging with parents on the implications of this and what we can do to help. We will also advise the Scottish Government what parents tell us. The Scottish Government propose childcare provision will reopen during phase 3 of the national recovery plan which should be in place before schools return. Our partner organisations are considering their own plans to reopen when it is safe to do so. We are working to make sure wraparound care services, such as breakfast and after school clubs, are open as soon as possible and we will work creatively with partners to do all we can to help.

Will Early Learning and Childcare settings reopen in August?

We cannot confirm this yet. At present there is not an agreed timeline for reopening services other than the critical childcare currently being provided for key workers and other eligible children. The Scottish Government propose childcare provision will reopen during phase 3 of the national recovery plan. Childminders and fully outdoor nurseries may be able to open sooner than other settings. We appreciate this is a big concern for many parents and we will give you further details as soon as possible.

What will Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) be like?

Our Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings are acting on Scottish Government advice and putting in appropriate arrangements to support children. Parents/carers will be contacted by staff with more information when it is available. As a result of the epidemic the Scottish Government advised on 30 March 2020 that councils no longer have a duty to provide 1140 funded hours from August 2020. The national commitment to provide these funded hours remains in place, however full implementation of this is delayed at present. Has there been any consideration of the impact of these approaches on children and young people?

Across our schools there will be an overall focus on wellbeing and children, and we will monitor young people's responses. There is guidance and support for staff on how to explain some of the measures. Educational Psychologists and Children's Services will also work closely with schools to support best practice to maintain wellbeing and resilience.

Will my child have the same teacher as last year?

Each school will make its own arrangements about staffing.

Can children be in the same group/attend on the same day as friends?

We cannot guarantee this, as many other factors relating to health and safety measures must be taken into account when planning.

What support is being offered for children with additional support needs? Will support plans be updated to take blended learning into account?

Some children, including children with additional support needs, may require more support to return to school or ELC settings, or may require additional support if they have a high level of vulnerability. In these circumstances, the child's school will be in touch with parents/carers direct to discuss how best to support their return to school. The ASL Service and Psychological Services will work with schools to plan support for children with more complex needs, involving third-sector partners as required. Parents will be included in the planning process for their child and will be consulted at each stage of the plan.

[Enquire](#) has a useful web page on what all the changes caused by Coronavirus mean for children with additional support needs.

What about childcare over the summer holidays?

You can [apply for critical child](#) care over the summer at one of our summer hubs.

Will Council consider offering wraparound care - breakfast and after school club to support working parents?

Limited childcare for key workers' children will continue throughout the summer. If you think your child may be eligible, you can [find out more](#) here.

I've been asked to return to work and I'm not a key worker. What childcare will be available to me and when? Is the Council liaising with employment bodies so they can support the new proposal for teaching children and to make sure parents will not be penalised for not being able to be in work full time?

The Scottish Government propose childcare provision will reopen during phase 3, and partner organisations are considering their own planning to reopen when it is safe to do so. As an employer we recognise many of our staff will have childcare concerns and so we will be as flexible as possible to help them and hope other employers will do the same.

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Will external childcare arrangements be considered when allocating school places?

It is not possible to guarantee this, as we will have to ensure that children attend school in the patterns available to schools, based on their capacity.

What about children who have Child's Plans and are receiving child protection support having access to services previously provided in school? How will health professionals see children given physical distancing?

All Child and Young People's Plans are regularly reviewed to make sure the most appropriate supports are in place at this time.

What happens if children/young people don't engage or struggle with the blended model? Is there any potential for pupils being held back a year?

We recognise that all children and young people will require to reconnect with school, and so the curriculum will be adapted. A focus group of children, young people and teaching staff is being formed to continue to develop blended learning approaches to fit the learning needs of all children and young people. We do not intend to take forward repeat years unless there are exceptional individual circumstances not pertinent to all children affected by school closures.

What will the details of transition from nursery to P1 and P7 to S1 look like and what additional support will be given to those pupils transitioning?

Nursery to Primary 1 transition is a key focus for our schools and ELC settings, so that children at this stage have access to information about their new school and its staff. This will be completed in a variety of forms: for example, your child's new school may produce a video to help your child become more familiar with their new school.

Although children will not have had ELC for a number of months when they move into Primary 1, staff will be able to provide an environment and curriculum that suits and adapts to the needs of the children in their class. Transition arrangements will be put in place to make sure class teachers have detailed information regarding each child's progress in learning so that they can continue a pathway suited to the child. It is also important to stress that activities that support building confidence and relationships will also be key to children successfully settling into Primary 1.

For P7 pupils going into S1, schools have been creatively using technology in a variety of exciting ways to prepare them as part of their transition programme. The usual processes to ensure information is appropriately shared are being followed and extra measures are in place for young people who need extra support.

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How will the school day balance out academic and social aspects? Children and young people have missed the social interactions with their friends/opportunities to work with classmates on projects.

Pupils will work in classrooms alongside their peers and learning and social experiences will be planned by teachers and school staff in line with relevant guidance.

My child is worrying about going back to school - how can I help them?

It's understandable that your child may be worried about going back to school after spending so much time with you at home. This is normal, and the school will be expecting it. If your child is feeling worried or if you have any concerns about how they will feel going back, you should discuss this with their teachers who will be able to provide further advice and support.

Do children have to go back in August? If one parent is at home can they choose to keep them off?

It is important that children return to school if they can do so safely. If you have any concerns about your child going back, you should contact their teacher or headteacher to discuss this. If they need to stay at home, they should continue with learning at home based on the advice from their teachers.

My child should be starting school in August but I'd prefer they didn't - can I defer and keep them in Early Learning and Childcare centre?

Schools will be doing everything they can to support children when they come back to school, no matter what year they're in. We will be working hard to make sure that children have a positive transition, so that they're ready to start school. However, if you're considering keeping your child in ELC for an extra year, please get in touch with our Schools team. Deferrals can only be considered for exceptional individual circumstances.

My child is in P7 or S6 - will they miss out on the leaving prom/ceremony altogether?

Children who have missed out on opportunities to celebrate leaving school will have the opportunity to do so at a later date. Your child's school will be thinking about appropriate ways for children to mark these important changes and will contact you to let you know how these arrangements will be made. Make sure you keep in touch with updates from the school to see what they're planning to do.

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