

Our Ref: LM/AC
Date: 18 June 2020



TO ALL PARENTS/CARERS

Dear Parent/Carer

Following the Scottish Government's announcement on the reopening of schools in Scotland, I write to update you on plans for schools and Early Learning and Childcare Centres (ELCC) in West Dunbartonshire.

Children and young people will begin their phased return to schools and ELCCs from Wednesday 12 August for a blended model of in school learning and home learning which includes our virtual school Campus@wdc.

We understand that there are a number of different opinions across our communities on the return to school and in developing our model we were keen to reflect the views of as many people as possible.

Our priority is to offer children as much physical time in school as possible while ensuring the safety of all, as outlined in the requirements for reopening by the Scottish Government.

Meetings have been held with Head Teachers, Parent Council representatives, Senior Education Officers and Trade Union representatives to discuss the options for the new blended learning model in West Dunbartonshire's schools and centres. The August model will be reviewed initially in October.

Previously your child's entitlement was the equivalent of 1140hrs or 600hrs per year, depending on the ELC your child attended. Under the new model, children will now receive approximately 16 hours split across two full days and one half day every second week which is the equivalent of 600 hours per year.

Returning on 12 August: All 2, 3 and 4 year old children who had a place prior to the Coronavirus and 0-2 year olds.

Returning in September 2020: All children who were due to start their placements in April 2020.

Returning in September and October: All children who were due to start their placements in August.

This phasing will ensure that children are safely returned and that new children are given time to settle.

Primary school children will attend school for two days each week and the remaining days will be spent at home doing a mix of online learning and completing work sent with the child from school. This work will be reviewed when they return to the classroom to ensure pupil progress is monitored.

Our secondary schools will design bespoke models of learning to suit individual schools. The number of days students spend in-school will vary. As a minimum, senior phase pupils in S4, 5 and 6 will attend school two days every week with students in S1, 2 and 3 attending one day each week.

The final model was the preferred option as it provided the most in-class teaching time while ensuring that physical distancing guidance can be adhered to.

We will also be staggering lunchtimes and breaks, including start and finish times to reduce the number of children entering and leaving at any one time.

This model also offers children who are entitled to free school meals the opportunity to have lunch in school two days each week. The days pupils are not in school/ELCC they will be given a Farmfoods voucher to purchase food to prepare at home.

Your Head Teacher will contact you to share information about the days your child will be in school. Please ensure your contact details held by the school are up to date to ensure you receive this important information.

I would like to thank everyone who provided valuable feedback and comments which are reflected in the development of this new model of learning, including our Trade Union representatives.

We are very pleased with our latest figures which show 95% of our children are engaging in online learning. This also points to the commitment of our teaching staff and you as parents and carers, but it also shows 80% of our pupils are enjoying their home learning, and 85% feel they are making progress.

To further support our learners at home we will soon be launching a virtual school campus@wdc which will be led by a Head Teacher and supported by teachers from across the authority. campus@wdc will offer pupils a mix of live and pre-recorded lessons which pupils can work through at home on the days they are not in school.

Our teachers have been working hard since schools closed in March to ensure your children have access to daily learning activities online which are both interesting and fun to help them to continue to engage in their education and this will continue into next term.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all our families who have continued to support their child's education and to our dedicated staff who are continuing to encourage and motivate children in these challenging times.

An extensive list of frequently asked questions is attached to this letter and also available on our website <https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/> which will help answer some of the queries you may have.

In the meantime, if you have any questions please contact your Head Teacher or Head of Centre who will be happy to help.

With best wishes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Mason". The script is cursive and elegant.

Laura Mason
Chief Education Officer

Council Offices
16 Church Street
Dumbarton G82 1QL
Direct line 01389 737304
Email address laura.mason@west-dunbarton.gov.uk