

Wallace Hall Update – 03.12.20 - COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

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Public Health Phone Number: 01387 272724

NHS24 Phone Number: 111

NHS Website: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>

Dear Parent/Carer

Whole School

It now looks like Dumfries & Galloway will remain in Level 2 restrictions for the foreseeable future.

This week letters went out to ELC parents and Primary parents about pre-Christmas arrangements in school.

The Academy sent out a Groupcall to parents yesterday about the school Christmas lunch and how to order those.

Although most people are following the rules, we can sense a feeling of fatigue amongst pupils with regards to the measures in place in school and we will be monitoring this closely and will need to put sanctions on any repeat offenders, particularly in relation to the wearing of face coverings, wiping down their work spaces and washing hands/using hand sanitiser.

You, as parents, can help to support us by reminding your child(ren) about the measures and ensuring that they leave home with an appropriate face covering.

Please remember that, should your child display symptoms, you should keep them at home until they have been tested. If you are unsure about their symptoms please keep your child at home until you have spoken to your GP or to the NHS Team by phone on 111. They will advise you on whether your child should have a COVID test.

Likewise, if a household member display symptoms, any other household members should self-isolate until the person has been tested. Please do not send your child(ren) to school in this situation.

Christmas Holidays

Although there were rumours in the press earlier this week that the school holidays could be extended over the Christmas period, the First Minister has confirmed today that, after much deliberation and advice from Public Health, there will be no extension. The last day of term for Wallace Hall pupils will be Friday 18th December 2020 and the return date in January will be Wednesday 6th January 2021.

John Swinney, Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, sent out a letter explaining how he came to the decision not to extend the holidays and the letter ended with:

“Finally, I am sure that all members of the Committee will join me in expressing our gratitude and sincere thanks to school leaders, teachers, all school staff and local authority education officials for their outstanding commitment to the education and wellbeing of Scotland’s children and young people this

session. The exceptional professionalism and dedication of staff has enabled children and young people to learn safely in school since the return in August. We are also very grateful for the ways in which school staff have supported continuity of learning for children and young people who have been absent from school for COVID-19 related reasons."

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Likewise, if a household member display symptoms, any other household members should self-isolate until the person has been tested. Please do not send your child(ren) to school in this situation.

Testing for COVID-19 and Self-Isolating

Please remember that if your child(ren) are off school because they, or a member of your household, is being tested for COVID-19, you must let the school know of the result at the earliest opportunity, and at least **BEFORE** they return to school.

We would really appreciate it if you could keep us informed of any testing or test result, whether for our pupil or someone in their household.

Ventilation in School Buildings

Following the information we sent out before the holidays regarding the need for windows to be open in classrooms, we would like to remind you to ensure your child(ren) brings a warm jumper which they will be allowed to wear in class when it is cold. However, school uniform must still be worn.

Following some concerns raised by pupils, parents and staff regarding how cold people are, we would like to make the following points:

- The advice from Scottish government and therefore from our local authority is that we must have windows and internal doors open in classrooms/offices etc to allow for fresh air to flow through each room.
- If the windows and doors were shut the risk would be higher of COVID19 spreading in the event of a positive case within school.
- All pupils and staff members have been advised to wear warmer clothing and we have relaxed the school rules on uniform to allow for warm jumpers to be worn over their uniform.
- If pupils are complaining of being cold but have no extra layers on, please remind them that they should bring a warm jumper to wear.
- We have advised all staff that windows do not have to be wide open, leaving them 'on the latch' is acceptable and will still allow fresh air into the room.
- We are not expected to have every window in a classroom open and teachers will use their professional judgement about how many windows need to be open.

- The heating is now on all day, rather than going off mid-afternoon. The cut-off temperature on the heating system has been raised and all radiators in the building can be turned up higher if necessary. We hope this will help with the temperatures in the classrooms while we are having to keep windows open.
- There are thermometers in all classrooms - if the temperature falls below 19 degrees, teachers should alert the janitors. If there are ongoing issues they should alert the school management team.
- If any pupils are sitting near a window and ask to be moved away from the window teachers have been asked to arrange for this to happen.

Cold Weather Arrangements

Unless the weather is very wet we will always be encouraging pupils to spend as much time outdoors as possible before school, during break and lunchtime. Please ensure that your child(ren) have warm jackets to wear.

Safe Route to School

We would like to remind all parents/carers about the importance of all children using the identified safe route to school at the beginning and end of the day. Please stress to your child/children that they must only cross the roads leading to school with the appropriate crossing patrol person. Crossing without an adult's supervision at the old Primary School building on Station Road is not suggested by the school as this is not the designated safe crossing. Younger children should be accompanied by an adult to support them to be safe on their journey to and from school.

Wearing of face coverings on public/school transport and in shops

All pupils, over the age of 5 **must** wear a face covering when travelling on either public or school transport, including school minibuses. They **must** also wear face coverings when they are both queuing to get in, and inside any shops. Please ensure that your child(ren) has an appropriate face covering and explain that there are vulnerable people around who may be at a higher risk if they were to catch the COVID 19 virus. Anyone with breathing difficulties or another medical reason for not wearing a mask is exempt. Please let us know if this is the case for your child(ren).

Phase 2 Risk Assessment – Re-opening of Schools

This is a working document and we welcome any feedback from parents on this. If you have any concerns regarding the health & safety of your children, please do get in touch with us via the school email addresses. We will be reviewing it on a weekly basis and will upload a copy of the updated version (along with the date) to the website when changes are made.