

Phase 2 of the return to in-person learning

Guidance for preparing in-school and remote learning for S1 - S6

3 March 2021
[Version 1.0]

Purpose

- 1 This guidance has been issued in response to the First Minister's statement to Parliament on 2 March concerning the Phase 2 return to school. It is intended to provide support for local authorities and secondary schools on providing arrangements for senior phase learners to return to school (from the week commencing 15 March 2021, and conditional on continued progress on suppressing infection rates). It builds on the Phase 1 return to school which commenced on 22 February and included limited numbers of senior phase learners to allow for essential practical work. The Annex to this guidance, provided by the Scottish Government, summarises the key changes and requirements which will remain in place from 15 March.
- 2 The Phase 2 return to school builds on the successful work around Phase 1. It allows flexibility for a combination of some in-school learning and continued remote learning for all S1-S6 learners. The return to school is important for learners' health and wellbeing as well as for learning. S4-6 learners completing National Qualifications should be prioritised for in-school time in order to deliver the Alternative Certification Model (ACM) that has been developed. As with Phase 1, the learning and teaching of critical practical work in relation to qualifications in 2021 that can only be carried out in school, should continue.
- 3 Schools should set a rationale with a clear purpose for the range of learners who are coming into school at any time and careful planning must take place to make the most effective use of any in-school time. Local authorities and schools are in the best position to determine the balance between in-school and remote learning at individual school level, based on local circumstances, to meet the needs of different groups of learners. This guidance identifies key considerations and principles for local authorities and schools to consider in taking account of local factors to determine local arrangements.
- 4 All aspects of the existing '[Coronavirus: guidance on reducing the risks in schools](#)' and the '[Coronavirus: Arrangements for the phased reopening of schools](#) in February / March 2021 - supplementary guidance' continue to apply while schools are open. Note that these will continue to be updated over coming days. The most recent advice from the [Covid-19 Advisory Group on Education and Children's Issues](#) was published on Wednesday 3 March.
- 5 Practitioners across Scotland have been providing remote learning of high quality for learners. Positive feedback on remote learning from parents, carers and learners provides reassurance that for many learners good progress in learning is being made. Schools should continue to encourage and monitor learners' engagement in their remote learning provision. Schools are also encouraged to make use of the [National e-Learning Offer](#).

- 6 Schools are in the best place to understand how many learners can be accommodated within the school at one time, based on the flexibility provided by the school and community environment and in-keeping with 2m physical distancing between learners, between adults, and between adults and learners who are not from the same household.

Key Considerations

- 7 The Key Considerations of this guidance are as follows:
 - Maximise the number of children and young people who are receiving in-school learning (within operational considerations in each school and in line with clinical and scientific advice) while remote learning continues for others.
 - Building on Phase 1, give priority for lessons to learners who are taking National Qualifications. This will ensure that learning continues towards their qualifications under the 2021 Alternative Certification Model.
 - Where possible, ensure all learners in secondary schools receive some in-school education each week, for example, to help schools continue to connect with learners, support their health and wellbeing and support the transition back to full time schooling.
 - Maintain provision for key worker children and vulnerable learners.
 - Continue to ensure daily registration/check-in arrangements for every learner.
 - Maintain 2m physical distancing between learners, between adults, and between adults and learners who are not from the same household.
- 8 The following Principles should guide local authorities and schools in planning their provision for learning:
 - Schools are best placed to decide on timetable arrangements based on their detailed local knowledge of learners, their choices within courses, accommodation availability and school transport.
 - Schools should communicate the rationale for in-school and remote learning to parents, carers and learners. Communication should also include detailing the Covid-19 mitigations to be followed, all aspects of the existing guidance and accompanying mitigations continue to apply, and how the new requirement for 2m physical distancing will work.
 - Within the blended learning arrangements, schools should prioritise in-school learning for Senior Phase learners to ensure that they have a secure foundation and course coverage prior to any formal assessment for a range of qualifications (for example NQs, NPAs, SfWs and FAs and others) taking place in the later stages of the 2020/21 academic session.
 - Schools should prioritise subject areas and cohorts of learners where there is greatest need as identified by the school, for example, targeted support for learners who may struggle with the transition back to secondary school or to allow access to practical facilities to support certification.

- To facilitate the above, schools may need to consider any adaptations required to the offer of remote delivery. Guidance on [remote learning](#), including principles and entitlements, was published on 8 January. Education Scotland and partners are extending the National e-Learning Offer across S1-3 to provide an increased range of live, recorded and other materials to support practitioners in preparing remote learning.
 - Make best use of the building and space out learners to ensure they adhere to the requirement for 2m physical distancing. Be clear as to routines for the safe entry and exit to the school building.
 - Schools should minimise, wherever possible, the general flow of learners around the school through the day.
 - Consideration should be given to the use of other facilities to support in-school learning such a gym-halls and community centres, if possible.
- 9 Local authorities and schools are encouraged to enhance in-school and remote learning provision with a complementary wellbeing and outdoor learning package that helps them to continue to connect with learners, support readiness to return to in-school learning, and provides experiences to support learning and wellbeing.

Physical Education and Dance

- 10 Guidelines on [Practical Activities](#) have been prepared by Education Scotland to assist with decision-making and the safe implementation of timetabled physical education and dance. This guidance will be kept under review. Further advice will be published in Scottish Government Reducing Risks in Schools guidance to be published on the week beginning 8 March 2021.

College Provision

- 11 From 15 March, colleges will be able to prioritise the return of further senior phase school learners studying at college who require in-person provision now in order to complete or learners. School learners returning to college must be included within the 5% limit on the number of students on campus at any one time for in-person learning. Pupils should only be on campus for the duration of the practical work and should continue to learn remotely for those course elements where this is possible.
- 12 The college guidance applies to senior phase school learners attending college. Senior phase school learners attending college will be expected to follow the guidelines put in place by their college. Each college should ensure that senior school learners are fully aware of their responsibilities when on their campus.

Further Support

- 13 Education Scotland will work with Senior Leaders in schools to enable them to share emerging practical examples of how this guidance can be taken forward in a range of different settings. Further details of a first webinar (to take place week beginning 8 March) will be shared on the Education Scotland website.

Conclusion

- 14 Local authorities and schools are invited to use this guidance in developing their own arrangements for learners across S1-6 to spend some time in school from 15 March until the Easter break. Schools are best placed to determine the local arrangements that reflect the Key Principles and other advice set out in this guidance. They can also explain clearly to learners, parents and carers the rationale and detailed practical arrangements for learners across the relevant subject areas.

Summary of key changes announced in FM statement on 2 March

The First Minister's statement to Parliament on 2 March announced that Phase 2 of the return to school will take place on 15 March, unless new evidence or new circumstances require this to be reconsidered.

Key points that will apply from 15 March:

- All remaining primary school children, those in P4-P7, will return to school full-time from 15 March.
- Regulated childcare, including breakfast and after-school clubs, for primary pupils will re-start on 15 March
- All secondary pupils will return on a part-time basis from 15 March - it is the intention that all secondary school pupils will return to spend some time in school from 15 March until the Easter break.
- Councils will decide how to safely balance in-school learning for secondary school learners based on local circumstances and needs.
- Senior phase students (S4-S6) who are taking national qualifications will have priority for face-to-face lessons in school.
- Vulnerable young people and the children of keyworkers to continue to be supported in school
- 8% cap on numbers in secondary schools removed
- Remote learning will continue in parallel for all secondary school learners
- Face coverings to be worn at all times by staff and young people in secondary school
- A greater emphasis should be placed on good ventilation
- Strict 2 metre distancing to be observed in the school building in secondary schools
- The requirement for strict 2 metre distancing in secondary schools may be relaxed when young people are outdoors for the purpose of outdoor activities and learning
- Easing of 2 metre distancing on secondary school transport to 1 metre (matching public transport)
- Secondary schools should look to minimise movement of young people and staff when in school
- Local authorities will be encouraged to support young people's wellbeing in other ways - for example, by providing more opportunities for outdoor learning.
- Colleges, who can have up to 5% of learners on campus at any one time, will also be able to prioritise senior phase pupils
- It is expected that all secondary school pupils will be back in school on a full time basis after the Easter holidays.

The plans are conditional on continued progress on suppressing coronavirus (COVID-19).

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