

Your Ref:

Our Ref: Schools Services\CoronaVirus
\Parents and Pupils GB/MS

17 June 2020

Skills, Education and Learning

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Dear Parents

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE

Our Council is committed to supporting parents and carers during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring all our regions children have the best start in life and our Early Learning and Childcare services are a key part of this. I wanted to write to you to provide you with further information on our plans for Early Learning and Childcare as we move through the phases of the Scottish Government's Routemap.

I want to say thank you to all our parents and carers for doing their very best to support their children in what we know has been an anxious few months for everyone.

I am also very grateful to all Early Learning and Childcare staff in our school hubs, in partner providers and childminders who have been continuing to support children over the last few months, providing childcare for keyworkers and keeping in contact with families through this difficult period.

On Monday, 15 June, Scottish Government published guidance for Early Learning and Childcare Services which states what should be done to prepare for children's safe return to Early Learning and Childcare services.

The guidance states we will have to change how Early Learning and Childcare is provided, and that social distancing will remain in the coming months. The way that services will operate will not be the same in every setting due to the variety of different buildings and outdoor spaces that our nurseries and childcare settings operate out of.

Services/-

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Services will need time to take account of the guidance and put plans in place and we ask for your patience as we develop these plans. It may mean that some services will not be able to have as many children in their learning spaces at one time as they had before. This may mean that services may not be able to offer you all of the hours that you have requested from August. You will receive information on what this means for your child as soon as possible.

Scottish Government have paused the nursery expansion programme for 1140 hours. This means it is no longer a legal requirement for those hours to be delivered, however, our Council is committed to offering families as many hours as possible during the recovery period as part of our commitment to giving our region's children the best start in life.

I understand that this temporary way we deliver Early Learning and Childcare will mean that families need to make adjustments for work and childcare arrangements and that this would mean some continued disruption for those of you who are working but this is unavoidable due to COVID-19

Over the next few weeks you will hear more from your child's nursery about the hours that will be offered to your child and what the new operating arrangements will look like.

I understand that this is a very difficult time for everyone however your child's safety is our priority as we continue to plan for high quality Early Learning and Childcare services across our region.

You can find out more about the guidance here

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-on-reopening-early-learning-and-childcare-services/pages/overview/>

Yours sincerely



Dr Gillian Brydson
Director Skills, Education and Learning