

EDUCATION, LEISURE & HOUSING

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Dear Parents/Carers

This note provides the latest information on the approach being taken by Education, Leisure and Housing Directorate in managing the ongoing Covid-19 situation. The advice contained in this note will be reviewed daily and updated as appropriate.

As of Monday 16th March, there has been a step change in the approach to delaying the spread of COVID-19 across the UK. Individuals who develop either of the **specific symptoms** of a continuous cough and/or high temperature, however mild, are asked to stay at home and not leave the house for 7 days. If the symptoms worsen or do not improve after 7 days, they should contact NHS 24 or their GP.

In such circumstances other members of the household should stay at home for 14 days. If they then develop symptoms, they should stay at home for 7 days from the day the symptoms began.

[NHS inform](#) has full information about COVID-19, as well as advice on what action individuals should take.

Everyone can help delay the spread of the infection by:

- Avoiding direct hand contact with your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Maintaining good hand hygiene.
- Avoiding direct contact with people that have a respiratory illness and avoiding using their personal items such as their mobile phone.
- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with disposable tissues and disposing of them in the nearest waste bin after use.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser before eating and drinking, and after coughing, sneezing and going to the toilet.

The baseline position across Education Leisure and Housing Service is that:

- Early learning & childcare setting and Schools will run in line with UK and Scottish Government Guidance.
- There is no change to the published SQA National Qualifications examination timetable.

The following significant, temporary changes to provision should be noted:

- All overseas school trips are cancelled, until the end of June in the first instance, in line with Scottish Government guidance.

- All parents' evenings are cancelled.
- We will continue to reinforce the core message of hand hygiene and, consequently, the use of hand-shake greetings will be discontinued until further notice.
- All sporting/musical/cultural events scheduled for schools between now and Easter are cancelled.
- All after school clubs are cancelled.
- All swimming classes are cancelled.

Next Steps

During the course of this week, schools and services will:

- Risk assess all off-island school trips within the UK on a case by case basis.
- Establish a plan to compress classes/services in the event of staff shortage.
- Establish teaching plans/guidance for pupils and their families in the event of school closure.
- Ensure that all pupils have functioning access to Glow in case we are required to provide educational provision through this medium.
- Ensure that there is up-to-date awareness of any barriers to pupils, collectively or individually, accessing Glow from home.
- Ensure that materials for the completion of senior phase courses are readily available for dissemination to pupils at short notice.
- Seek guidance from NHS Orkney in respect of communal primary school toothbrushing activity.
- Review SQA exam guidance on a daily basis.

I appreciate that this is an exceptionally worrying time, we are monitoring the situation continuously in line with Government guidance and local intelligence.

Please direct any questions or concerns you have directly to your school who are in daily contact with the Education, Leisure and Housing Directorate.

Yours faithfully

James Wylie
Executive Director