

<b>Title</b>	<b>Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Settings Re-Opening Frequently Asked Questions</b>
<b>Audience</b>	<b>Parents and Carers</b>
Version/ date	Version 1 (1st June 2020) Updated 1 July 2020
Introduction	<p><b>The aim is to reopen ELC settings on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020</b></p> <p>On 21<sup>st</sup> May the Scottish Government confirmed that schools and ELC settings will open to children and young people from the 11<sup>th</sup> August. Since then it has been confirmed that the 10<sup>th</sup> August will be a holiday and the 11<sup>th</sup> August will be an in-service day, so schools will open from the 12<sup>th</sup> August.</p> <p>Scottish Government guidance regarding COVID may change and it is understandable that parents and carers will have questions and concerns about their child returning to school and ELC in August. In this communication, we have answered a number of frequently asked questions to seek to address those queries.</p> <p>As always, the safety and wellbeing of our children, young people, their families, and our staff is our top priority, and we hope the measures we have put in place reassure you that your child will be safe upon return. At the same time, we must recognise that education provision in August 2020 will be different to before the lockdown.</p> <p>The Scottish Government guidelines still highlight the importance of reducing contact between people, including children in schools, to reduce the risk of the virus spreading.</p>

Ref.	Question	Response
Returning to ELC Settings		
1.	I don't feel comfortable about sending my child to ELC. Will they have to attend?	Highland ELC settings are looking forward to welcoming your child back to learning and will be taking every precaution to ensure the environment is as safe as possible. It is up to you as parent if you wish for your child to attend or not.
2.	What hours will my child be funded for?	The Scottish Government advised on 30 March 2020 that councils no longer have a statutory duty to provide 1140 funded hours from August 2020. The national commitment to provide these funded hours remains in place however full implementation of this will be delayed due to the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.  If your child's ELC setting was already delivering 1140hrs, they will continue to do so. If they were delivering 600 hrs, this is what you will continue to receive not the 1140 hrs planned for August pre Covid-19.
3.	If I can't get 1140 hours of ELC in August, when will I get it?	We will work towards providing 1140 hours in line with the Scottish Government's revised timetable when it is released
4.	Why will some nurseries be open on 15 <sup>th</sup> July?	Scottish Government expect that all registered childcare providers will be able to open from 15 July, if they choose to do so. This depends on Scotland moving to <u>Phase 3</u> of the route map out of lockdown by then. Scottish Government don't expect all settings to open straight away and recognise that term-time settings are likely to open in August. Schools ELC settings will open on 12 <sup>th</sup> August.
5.	How can I get updated information or answers to questions over the summer holidays?	The following resources may help answer any other questions you may have. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Club <a href="#">here</a></li> <li>• Care inspectorate here <a href="#">Covid-19 Guidance</a></li> <li>• Scottish Government website <a href="#">SG Guidance</a></li> </ul>

Ref.	Question	Response
6.	What happens if my ELC setting needs to operate a part time model or a full closure is required?	<p>If cases of Covid 19 increase after restrictions have been lifted, our ELC may need to close again, possibly even at short notice. These decisions will be taken based on national, and scientific advice and further Scottish Government guidance. We will make you aware of our specific arrangements. Our agreement may change from a full time reopening to an offer of part time hours.</p> <p>If these changes are required, our setting will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• safeguard the health and wellbeing of our young children and the adults who work with them</li> <li>• ensure we reopen in a manner which is consistent with wider efforts to control transmission of the virus and protect the health of our children, their families, and our staff group</li> <li>• takes into consideration the capacity guidance and our staffing arrangements</li> </ul> <p>The core public health measures described in the Scottish Government phase 3 guidance on re-opening of ELC services underpin the reopening of our full time reopening and have been used to inform our risk assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhanced hand hygiene and cleaning practice</li> <li>• maximizing the use of outdoor spaces</li> <li>• physical distancing between adults in the setting including parents at drop-off and pick-up times</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Safety</b>		
7.	Should children who are shielding or medically vulnerable return in August?	<p>It is not expected that <b>clinically extremely vulnerable</b> children attend nursery, school or college, and they should continue to be supported at home as much as possible.</p> <p>Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) people are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. A small minority of children will fall into this category, and parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category.</p>
8.	What will happen if a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19	<p>If a child, young person or staff member develops symptoms of the coronavirus, they should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days and advised to book a test. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days.</p>

Ref.	Question	Response
		<p>The “test, trace, isolate, support strategy” will have the greatest impact when people are confident in what to do if they have symptoms, are able to receive the test quickly, and get results delivered rapidly.</p> <p>All children / staff members that the person who tests positive has had contact with would be advised to self- isolate in line with “test, trace, isolate support strategy”.</p> <p>All staff and children will have access to a test if they display symptoms of coronavirus and are encouraged to get tested in this scenario.</p> <p>Where the child, young person or staff member tests negative, they can return to school and the fellow household members can end their self-isolation.</p> <p>Where the child, young person or staff member tests positive, the rest of their group should be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 14 days. The other household members of that wider group do not need to self-isolate unless the child, young person or staff member they live with in that group subsequently develops symptoms.</p> <p>Questions about Health Protection or Test &amp; Protect can be sent to the Health Protection Team <a href="mailto:hpt.highland@nhs.net">hpt.highland@nhs.net</a> or the Test &amp; Protect Team <a href="mailto:high-uhb.covid-19contacttracing@nhs.net">high-uhb.covid-19contacttracing@nhs.net</a></p>
9.	How will you limit the risk of infection for my child and will there be a strategy to reduce areas of frequently touched surfaces?	<p>All Highland settings are currently carrying out risk assessments ahead of re-opening in August, so that they can put in place a program of control measures to limit the risk to staff and children.</p> <p>Due to the age of some children who will be returning, physical distancing will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• following physical distancing guidelines between staff</li> <li>• rearranging rooms</li> <li>• limit mixing - children will stay in their groups and be assigned specific staff members</li> <li>• staggered drop-off and collection</li> </ul>

Ref.	Question	Response
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• minimizing contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend the setting</li> <li>• cleaning hands more often than usual - wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with running water and soap and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered ensuring good respiratory hygiene - promote the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach</li> <li>• cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as disinfectant</li> </ul>
10.	What hygiene protocols will you follow?	<p>We will use enhanced hand hygiene and cleaning practices during each session, ensuring all staff and children wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds frequently;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ on arrival at the setting</li> <li>○ before and after eating</li> <li>○ after toileting</li> <li>○ at regular intervals throughout the day</li> <li>○ when moving between different areas (e.g. between different rooms or between inside and outside)</li> </ul> <p>Please watch this video with your child/ren to help them understand the importance of this. <a href="#">Handwashing Video</a></p> <p>A supply of antibacterial hand gel will be available to parents and staff at the entrance to the setting.</p>
11.	We know that young children learn through play, being active and communicating, so how will we safely implement this?	<p>We will continue to provide experiences and sensitive interactions in a variety of outdoor and indoor spaces, in ways which best support the needs of children.</p> <p>We want your child to enjoy their play and will actively promote the use of outdoor learning as part of their learning environment. Children will have access to toys and equipment that are easy to clean. All items will be cleaned following enhanced cleaning regime protocols. We will also support our families and young children with their home learning through suggestions of play activities.</p>

Ref.	Question	Response
12.	What sleeping arrangements will be provided at our ELC?	Children who sleep or nap in the setting will have individual bedding, stored in individual bags which will be laundered a minimum of weekly.
13.	Should my child wear a face covering, mask or other PPE?	<p>Government guidance states, “Wearing a face covering or face mask in schools or other education settings is not recommended” however, if using public transport, <b>pupils will be expected to wear a face mask during the journey and these should be provided by parents/carers.</b></p> <p><b>Staff will only wear PPE when;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a child whose care routinely already involves the use of PPE due to their physical or intimate care needs.</li> <li>• a child becomes unwell with symptoms of coronavirus while in their setting and needs direct personal care until they can return home. If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then gloves, an apron and a face mask should be worn by the supervising adult. If a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then eye protection should also be worn.</li> </ul> <p>If you have any concerns, please speak to the head teacher at your school</p>
14.	What extra training will be provided to HTs to allow them to carry out detailed risk assessments	<p>Head Teachers are already experienced in preparing risk assessments. Generic assessments on the management of COVID related risks will also be available for use within schools.</p> <p>Head Teachers are also receiving additional support and advice on COVID related risks from the Occupational Health Safety and Wellbeing department.</p>
15.	Will clear direction be given to parents about what symptoms pupils should be kept at home with if they are ill?	<p>The following link can be used for advice regarding COVID symptoms:</p> <p><a href="https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19">https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19</a></p> <p>Parents should follow previous Highland Council advice regarding all other medical conditions.</p>

Ref.	Question	Response
16.	My child has a condition (eg. minor allergies, a vulnerability to colds, etc) that often result in symptoms that are similar to COVID-19. Will they be sent home, and/or should I ask for weekly COVID-19 testing for them (to reassure others)?	<p>As a parent it is your responsibility to ensure your child is not presenting any COVID symptoms before attending the ELC setting.</p> <p>If a child develops symptoms of the coronavirus during the day, they will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 7 days and advised to book a test. Their fellow household members should self-isolate for 14 days.</p> <p>Using the “test, trace, isolate, support strategy” a test will be available, and the results will be delivered rapidly.</p> <p>All children / staff members that the person who tests positive has had contact with would be advised to self- isolate in line with “test, trace, isolate support strategy”.</p>
17.	How can I look after my child’s mental health and well-being?	<p>Guidance for parents and carers on looking after the mental health and well-being of children and young people during the COVID-19 outbreak can be found using the following link:</p> <p><a href="https://sites.google.com/millburnacademy.org.uk/highlanddigitalschoolshub/home">https://sites.google.com/millburnacademy.org.uk/highlanddigitalschoolshub/home</a></p>
18.	What will ELC settings do to help children feel safe and secure?	<p>Highland Council’s Promoting Positive Behaviour policy document will continue to be supported within settings.</p> <p>In addition to the above, Educational Psychologists have a role in promoting positive relationships across Highland.</p>

Ref.	Question	Response
<b>Drop off/Collection</b>		
19.	Will the ELC day start and end at the same time?	There may be some changes to the timings of the day to ensure settings can safely manage drop off and collection of children. Settings will clearly communicate these arrangements with parents before the return.
20.	How will I drop off and collect my child?	Collection and the dropping off children may be a different process to that of a few months ago. Settings are currently drawing up plans to ensure physical distancing can happen at these times. Further details on the arrangements will be sent to parents via the ELC setting's normal communication channels
21.	Usually someone else collects my child from ELC as I work, can someone from another household collect my child?	Scottish Government guidance would only allow someone to pick up a child from another household if a 2m distance is kept between them. This would be very difficult with young children and therefore we would advise only members from your household should collect your child.
<b>Social Distancing</b>		
22.	What will be the bubble group sizes?	<p><b>What is a 'bubble'?</b> - A 'bubble' is a defined group of people that one person comes into contact with regularly. It is essential for individuals to be in only one 'bubble', and two or more 'bubbles' should never cross. By ensuring that they only have contact within their 'bubble', individuals are protected against cross-contamination. ELC bubbles will have no more than 8 children.</p> <p>While groups in 'bubbles' (or a similar approach) should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk. However, one-way systems, or place a divider down the middle of the corridor to keep groups apart as they move through the setting will all be considered in the risk assessments.</p>

Ref.	Question	Response
23.	Should Physical distancing be in place in the ELC setting	<p><b>What is a bubble</b> - A 'bubble' is a defined group of people that one person comes into contact with regularly. It is essential for individuals to be in only one 'bubble', and two or more 'bubbles' should never cross. By ensuring that they only have contact within their 'bubble', individuals are protected against cross-contamination.</p> <p>While groups in 'bubbles' (or a similar approach) should be kept apart, brief, transitory contact, such as passing in a corridor, is low risk. However, one-way systems, or place a divider down the middle of the corridor to keep groups apart as they move through the setting will all be considered in the risk assessments. Movement of pupils around the school/setting will be kept to a minimum.</p>
<b>Classes/Staffing</b>		
24.	Will attendance be family-based to enable families to better manage childcare arrangements?	As a general principle, schools will invite children on the basis of family groups.
<b>Lunch and Snack Arrangements</b>		
25.	What are the Snack and Lunch Arrangements for ELC?	Hygiene procedures will be followed at all times. If your child has dietary requirements, please ensure that your enrolment information is up to date so that we ensure we are accommodating your child's needs. Where two cohorts use the same area at different times for eating, the area will be cleaned between each use.
26.	Will my child get a hot meal or a packed lunch?	<p>Children who are accessing 1140hrs of ELC will be provided with a funded meal if they are in for 4 hours or more each day.</p> <p>Children who are accessing 600hrs of ELC will be asked to bring a packed lunch, unless they are eligible for a free meal.</p>

Ref.	Question	Response
27.	What should I do if I think I might be eligible for Free School Meals?	Please visit our website at <a href="http://www.highland.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals">www.highland.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals</a> where you can apply on line and will receive an instant decision on your eligibility. If you are experiencing any problems with applying online please email the team with your full name, national insurance number and the child's name and date of birth at <a href="mailto:welfare.support@highland.gov.uk">welfare.support@highland.gov.uk</a> or phone 0800 090 1004. Calls are free from landline and mobile phones.
28.	Will there be toothbrushing at our ELC?	This will continue at ELC settings that have adequate facilities to do so. Only one child will clean their teeth in the sink at any one time, and staff will ensure that sinks are cleaned after use. Toothbrushes will be stored separately and in closed containers.

## Curriculum

29.	Education Resources are available on-line and this link also includes resources for adults and children with additional needs and learning difficulties?	All schools are being supported with online resources.  The highland digital hub can be accessed using the following link:  <a href="https://sites.google.com/millburnacademy.org.uk/highlanddigitalschoolshub/home">https://sites.google.com/millburnacademy.org.uk/highlanddigitalschoolshub/home</a>
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## Clubs and Hubs

30.	Will Breakfast Clubs and After School Clubs be open?	Breakfast Clubs and After School Clubs will be in operation.
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Ref.	Question	Response
31.	Can I purchase additional Hours?	Additional hours can be purchased by partners where capacity allows full return
32.	Can I still have a split placement?	<p>Phase 2 Scottish Government advice currently states the following - 'blended placements' (where children are attending two or more settings – for example a critical childcare hub followed by a childminder), should be avoided where possible, but may be permitted where this is the only option to support critical childcare arrangements, for example, for keyworker families. In such cases, this would be a matter for childminder discretion, following a risk assessment and consultation with the families and other setting concerned.</p> <p>Subject to Scotland moving to Phase 3 arrangements on the 15th July a further update on this question will be provided.</p> <p>If blended placement, 600h is the total given entitlement between providers.</p>