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**EDUCATION SERVICE**

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Date 5 August 2020

Dear Colleague

As we prepare for the reopening of schools and early years centres, I want to provide you with an assurance that the Council is putting in place comprehensive measures to make the return to school as safe as possible for all staff and pupils. A copy of the Council’s Local Phased Delivery Plan is attached and this provides detailed information on the arrangements for the reopening of schools and centres within East Dunbartonshire. A comprehensive risk assessment is in place in all establishments and full training will be provided on the in-service days.

In line with Public Health measures, there will be clear arrangements in place for enhanced hygiene, with hand sanitiser provided to supplement hand washing facilities. There will be enhanced cleaning in all schools and centres. This will include day cleaning and a clearly detailed protocol for cleaning standards. We will also have quality assurance measures in place with head teachers and trade union / staff representatives being supported by officers from Facilities Management. There will also be cleaning materials available to ensure a ‘Clean as you go’ approach where desks or equipment is shared in classrooms.

Physical distancing will be in place for all adults and between adults and children, with the exception of younger children and those with additional support needs. There will be clear signage in all establishments across the Council to reinforce the important Public Health Measures.

All schools will have additional measures in place to minimise contacts of pupils and staff and these Organisation and Operational Procedures will be clearly detailed in a Staff Handbook. There will be regular reviews of these arrangements and your views will be important in ensuring that the procedures in place are effective and consistently implemented.

Face coverings can be worn by staff and pupils but they are not mandatory in line with the Scottish Government Guidance. There will be clear procedures in place for the appropriate use of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). This will be informed by a risk assessment of the task to be carried out. All establishments will have a supply of PPE.

The central teams across the Council are focused on the reopening of schools and every effort is being made to provide reassurance to staff, pupils and parents that all measures will be in place to minimise the risks of Covid. This includes clear procedures in line with Public Health advice on procedures if there is a case of Covid within the school or centre.

We understand that this is an anxious time for many of you as we return to our schools and centres. There are arrangements in place for a risk assessment for any employee, who is concerned about returning to work. If you are have any concerns, please contact your line manager.

Finally thank you for all your work in supporting our children to return to school or nursery after such a difficult time for us all.

Kind regards

**JACQUI MACDONALD**

**Chief Education Officer**