

Your Ref: -
Our Ref: DM/II
Date: 16 March 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

As you know, we are in a complex situation with regard to schools and the Coronavirus. I fully understand your anxiety and concerns. The health and wellbeing of our children, families and our staff in Highland is of key importance. This letter will give you some clear messages about how we work together to address the Coronavirus situation.

During the current situation it is of the highest importance that you continue to monitor the health of your family and follow the advice given by the Scottish and UK Governments.

- As of 13 March anyone developing symptoms consistent with Coronavirus, however mild should self-isolate for 7 days.
 - The most common symptoms of Coronavirus are recent onset of new continuous cough and/or high temperature
- Information for the public on coronavirus, including stay at home advice for people who are self-isolating, can be found on the [NHS Inform](#) website.

As you know, the situation is ever-changing and we do already have examples of staff and families who are self-isolating in line with government advice as we support the delay of the spread of the Coronavirus. We also have examples that have come to our attention over the weekend of families keeping their children at home due to anxiety about the risk of infection. Of course we respect the decisions parents and carers make about the wellbeing of their children. We urge parents to follow the advice from the government as mentioned above.

The Highland Council is following Scottish Government advice which is that schools will remain open for the present time. It is possible that there may be specific situations that will lead to the closing of individual schools due to health concerns regarding children and/or staff, or if we don't have enough staff available to keep a school open. At the moment there is no confirmed diagnosis of coronavirus in any child in Highland schools.

We will be working hard to keep schools open in line with national guidance. This is a constantly changing picture and the Highland Council and schools will keep you updated.

Please note that as a precaution all parents evenings and afternoons have been postponed until further notice, as have all school trips, including off-site lessons such as swimming.

In preparation for the possibility of extended school closures Highland Council has teams working across a range of matters including:

- Resources for children working at home
- Guidance for Senior Phase pupils as they prepare for examinations
- Continuing the provision of free school meals

As a Council we are responsible under the Civil Contingency Act and the current situation means that it is no longer business as usual in Highland or in Scotland and the UK as a whole. We very much appreciate your support and understanding at this difficult time.

Finally, we want to emphasise to you that your children are our priority throughout all of our work. As a reminder, if you have any concern, please check the national advice which is on the national [Health Protection website](#). For the latest advice phone the NHS helpline on 0800 028 2816.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna Manson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Donna Manson
Chief Executive