

16 September 2020

Dear Parent(s) and Carer(s)

It is wonderful to see children finally returning back to schools across the city and beginning to resume a more normal routine to their education.

The last six months have been incredibly challenging for children, parents and schools and we would like to take this opportunity to once again thank parents for the pivotal role they have played in supporting their children's learning at home during lockdown, often juggling a range of conflicting demands on their time.

School staff have worked incredibly hard during the summer to put in place arrangements to ensure the safe re-opening of schools. Some of these arrangements, such as staggered start times and one-way systems, potentially cause inconvenience to parents and so we are most grateful to parents for their patience in working with the school for the benefit of the young people and the wider school community.

Despite the new term bringing a sense of optimism, there are still many challenges in enabling children to return to school safely and in managing infection rates.

We would ask that you continue to support your child's school in three important ways;

Firstly, we have received reports that in a few schools, parents are not socially distancing at drop off and pick up times. We appreciate that even with staggered starts, roads and paths close to schools become very congested. It is essential however, that parents maintain a distance of 2m to reduce potential transmission of the virus. It is also important to stick to your allotted drop off and pick up times and arrange for only one parent to accompany the child to reduce the number of adults arriving at and departing the school. We are aware that many parents have worn face coverings during this busy time and you may wish to consider this too.

Secondly, if your child is experiencing Covid-type symptoms, please do not send them to school. This risks infecting other children and staff and greatly increases the risk of the virus spreading.

Finally, although we appreciate the current difficulties in the national testing system, please get your child tested if he or she has Covid-type symptoms. If a child experiences symptoms and parents don't get them tested, guidelines state that the school has to presume that the child has tested positive. This could result in the school having to send home one or more classes of children to self-isolate. We are sure that you would agree that children have missed enough schooling and hence the need to avoid any situation which results in pupils missing more of their time in education unnecessarily.

Thank you for working in partnership with us and your child's school. Stay safe and well.

With best wishes



Councillor Jonathan Pryor
Executive Member for Learning and Skills



Saleem Tariq, OBE
Director, Children and Families