

Children to return to school in August

The Education Secretary John Swinney addressed Holyrood today and confirmed what was already widely expected, that all Scottish children will be allowed to go back to school in August.

There is guidance now published on The Scottish Government website to advise local authorities, schools and staff about the measures they need to take on reopening school buildings from 11 August onwards. We have embedded the guidance document below.

Each school is expected to conduct a risk assessment and set out what is called 'enhanced hygiene and cleaning arrangements'. Primary pupils do not have to physically distance from each other, but secondary school pupils should take practical steps to encourage distancing. This is said to be an additional measure beyond what is advised by the scientific evidence.

School staff will be expected to physically distance from each other and where possible from children and young people. There will be a surveillance programme developed for schools with regular testing and survey data. This will help the government and local authorities in identifying any instances of infection.



John Swinney MSP – Depute First Minister of Scotland, and Cabinet Minister for Education, seen speaking during an

interview.

PHOTO: Colin Fisher/Alamy Live news/SP Pool.

Mr Swinney said: "Ensuring the highest quality education for our young people, in a safe environment, is our absolute priority.

"I am pleased that scientific advice and progress in suppressing the virus has allowed us to decide that it is safe for children, young people and staff to return to school full-time.

"We have been clear that the return to school is not a return to normal. The virus remains a threat and schools will feel different for both pupils and staff.

"However, the scientific evidence suggests that the prevalence of the virus among young people is much lower than among the older population, and that young people are less likely to transmit it.

"This guidance we have published clearly sets out the approach that must be taken, including a number of specific risk-mitigation measures that will need to be introduced in all schools in order that they provide a safe environment for staff and pupils.

"Individual schools will carry out risk assessments on their estate, as they will know how to apply the guidance in a way that works best to ensure the safety of their setting.

"Scotland has an excellent programme of community surveillance. This allows us to monitor actively trends in the pandemic, both nationally and more locally. All schools will be supported to ensure they understand and apply Test and Protect, and this will be an important means of preventing any spread of the virus.

"We are also developing enhanced surveillance for schools. This information will help us to identify and understand the

extent and patterns of infection in the school population and inform the ongoing development of guidance to schools and local authorities.

“We have worked with trades unions and other partners to ensure that all necessary support is provided to schools, including, where required, the provision of personal protective equipment.”

An additional £30 million will be allocated to local authorities to bring in even more additional teachers, building on the £45 million already announced. This £75 million will be enough to recruit approximately 1,400 extra teachers to support education recovery and accelerate progress in achieving excellence and equity for Scotland’s children.

On top of £20 million initial funding, a further £30 million will be made available as part of a £50 million education recovery fund for councils. This will support cleaning, facilities management, school transport and other practical issues that are critical to ensuring a safe return to schools.

Mr Swinney continued: “Along with other previously announced commitments, today’s funding announcements mean we are making a total additional investment of £135 million to ensure that our children, young people and staff can be welcomed safely back into schools.

“This includes £75 million for additional teachers. That is enough for local authorities to recruit approximately 1,400 additional teachers into Scotland’s classrooms in the new school year, to support education recovery and accelerate progress with our aim of excellence and equity in Scottish education.”

Mr Swinney concluded: “I very much hope that this approach will give confidence to our school communities that the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and staff is ensured as we welcome them back to school.”

All information about Edinburgh schools can be found [here](#).




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