

Back to school for the summer term – how to stay safe at the school gates

Schools in Edinburgh return on 20 April, and the council is keen to ensure that all parents, carers and families are careful when they are at the school gates.

Part of the Spaces for People programme has been the work carried out by the City of Edinburgh Council to assess any measures required at schools to ensure that everyone has enough space to walk, wheel and cycle safely. These have included closing roads to vehicular traffic, removing guardrails and setting up new one way access gates.

The council is also sending out leaflets and posting messages on social media reminding everyone to wear masks, observe physical distancing and only have one parent or carer dropping off or picking children up after school. Car sharing is discouraged and households are being urged to ensure that any hedges are cut back to give extra space on pavements.

Councillor Karen Doran, Transport and Environment Vice Convener, said: “I’m sure children and young people across the city will be looking forward to the return to school and a sense of normality, and the chance to interact with their classmates.

“While this is a positive step in the lifting of lockdown restrictions, we must continue to observe guidance and take

care when mixing with other people. Over the last year we've been working hard to introduce measures outside of every school to help children and carers walk, cycle and wheel safely and easily while physically distancing.

"We're also encouraging everyone to follow advice to limit the spread of the virus, helping to make sure children can continue enjoying being back in the classroom."

Just a couple of months ago the temporary Quiet Route from Greenbank to the Meadows was installed, providing safe routes for children going to nearby schools.



Whitehouse Road on the Greenbank to the Meadows Quiet Route
Photo: © 2021, Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

Jessica Cameron, whose children go to James Gillespie's Primary School, said: "My family really appreciate the new quiet route to the Meadows, which covers a significant portion of our trip to school. With traffic reduced on Whitehouse Loan, we have more options for getting to school safely. My kids love cycling and riding scooters, and they're building their skills and confidence while not having to worry about avoiding cars. With more space, it's easy for us to socially distance if we run into their friends on the way to school."

Felicity Neyme, a member of the Parent Council at Davidson's Mains primary, said: "Without the new spaces for people measures, social distancing outside school would have been near impossible for families. Moreover, parents have been pleased to see a significant reduction in parking right outside school helping to reduce air pollution and keep kids safe from traffic accidents."

Colin and Michaela Jackson parents of a child at St Peter's RC Primary School, said: "We have used part of the new Greenbank to Meadows Quiet Route to cycle our 9 year old son to school since St Peter's reopened in March. In the past I frequently did the school run by car as I had an onward journey to work

but working from home has made it easier to do the school run actively every day. We really appreciate the measures being put in place by Edinburgh Council to support social distancing and active travel around schools. It means there is less traffic congestion at the school gates and it provides families with transport choice when we want to do the right thing for our children and local communities, not only that it provides us with the opportunity to have some fun and observe the world around us before starting the day.”

Tom Wallace, a member of Corstorphine Primary School Parent Council, said: “The extra pavement space which has been provided on Corstorphine High Street, particularly to the east between the school gates and Manse Road, has made a huge difference. Previously the area was congested with vehicles parking dangerously at the start and end of the school day and there wasn’t enough space for people to pass each other safely. The new layout has given the space they need and the new bollards also help to prevent pavement parking.

“The closure of Manse Street and Featherhall Road to through traffic at the rear of the school has been a great success in allowing space to social distance and providing a much more calm and safe environment around the school gates. Likewise the give way / ‘build out’ at the Ladywell Rd end has transformed a notoriously dangerous part of the journey to and from school for many.

“Various junctions around the school have also been narrowed and double yellow lines introduced – it means that dropped kerbs are no longer blocked by vehicles and roads are easier to cross with little ones

“Overall, it’s been very successful in improving conditions for people using pavements, especially for those with young children.”

Jayne Sprought, a Carrick Knowe mum, said: “Spaces for People

measures have greatly improved our twice daily pick up and drop off routine. It is much easier to give other adults social distancing space and makes it safer to cross roads thanks to significantly fewer cars being present or parked around the school due to road closures. Priority traffic filtration have made roads easier to cross and then once the kids are dropped off I appreciate the safety of segregated cycle lanes en route to my essential worker job.

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All primary school pupils returned full-time from 15 March, with secondary school pupils resuming in-school learning on a part-time blended basis. Earlier this month the Scottish Government confirmed all primary and secondary pupils would return to the classroom full-time as part of its easing of lockdown from 12 April (Edinburgh’s Easter holidays run until 20 April), with restrictions in place.

Spaces for schools:

Restarting education in the pandemic

To help us get our pupils back to school safely, we've made some changes close to where you live.



Widened footways

Use step down space and don't congregate



One-way systems and road closures

Get to know your new route



Parking and loading restrictions

Only park or stop in designated places



Vegetation cutback

Keep your hedges cut back to make space

For up to date information, support and advice visit parentclub.scot

Protecting all of us, takes all of us

Please familiarise yourself with changes in your area to help us get our young people back to school safely during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Find out more on our website

www.edinburgh.gov.uk/spacesforpeople

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