
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	9 March 2021
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/16/21/RB
Contact Officer:	Ruth Binks	Contact No:	01475 712748
Subject:	Education and Communities Committee: expedited business, relevant updates and operational log for the Education part of the Committee		

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider expedited business, relevant updates and the operational log for the Education part of the Education and Communities Committee.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The First Minister made an announcement on Tuesday 16 February 2021 confirming the current procedures in place for the management of COVID-19 and also the process for the phased re-opening of schools.

2.2 This report considers the following expedited business and relevant updates:

- Arrangements for the phased reopening of schools February 2021
- Support for Mental Health
- Arrangements for Remote Learning
- Update on SQA qualifications
- Vaccinations for Education Staff and asymptomatic testing programme in schools and early years settings
- Scottish Government Recovery Grants
- Education Equality Mainstreaming report
- Food and nutritional guidelines for schools
- Operational log

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Education and Communities Committee is asked to:

- note the contents of this report.
- Agree the use of the educational recovery funding as outlined in paragraph 5.6.
- Agree the education equality outcomes as outlined in paragraph 5.7.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The First Minister made an announcement on Tuesday 16 February 2021 confirming the current procedures in place for the management of COVID-19 and also the process for the phased re-opening of schools.
- 4.2 This report considers the expedited business, relevant updates and the operational log relevant to the Education part of the Education and Communities Committee.

5.0 RELEVANT UPDATES

5.1 Arrangements for the phased reopening of schools February 2021

The latest government guidance for the re-opening of schools and early years settings can be found at:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-schools-reopening/>
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-learning-and-childcare-services/>

The scientific advice underpinning the phased reopening of schools can be found at <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/covid-19-education-recovery/cerq-guidance/>

This guidance has been followed up by the Education Continuity (No 9) Direction which gives a legal basis for the implications of the guidance until March 12 2021.

The First Minister confirmed the arrangements for the phased reopening of schools for some children on 16 February 2020. These arrangements include:

- A full-time return of early learning and childcare for all children below school age;
- A full-time return to school for pupils in primaries 1 - 3; and
- A part-time return, albeit on a limited basis, for senior phase pupils to allow in-school practical work that is necessary for the completion of national qualification courses. Initially though, it is intended that there will be no more than around 5-8% of a secondary school roll physically present at any one time for these purposes.

Schools communicated arrangements for return on Wednesday 17 February 2021.

All P4 – 7, S1 – 3 and those S4 – 6 pupils not involved in practical subject assessments, will continue to learn remotely until at least 15 March 2021.

Guidance documents were published by the Scottish Government on Friday and today about the phased return to schools / centres. Schools have updated their existing policies and procedures.

5.2 Support for Mental Health in place for young people during the COVID pandemic

Since August 2020 Action for Children have run our new wellbeing service. This includes provision for 1:1 counselling for pupils as well as group interventions and curriculum-based models of support. This service continues to meet with the HOE and Principal Educational Psychologist on a fortnightly basis to review the period of implementation and to reflect on changes needed in respect of service delivery during the second lockdown. A good number of referrals had been received and processed over the autumn term and the counselling in place has continued since January albeit via virtual means in the majority of cases. All parents in Inverclyde have been written to in order to raise awareness of the service and this has seen a number of referrals being made since January 2021. We have also written to all senior phase pupils since January to raise their awareness and a number of self-referrals have now been received.

More on the offer can be found here: <https://services.actionforchildren.org.uk/inverclyde-children-and-young-peoples-wellbeing-service/>

All schools continue to identify vulnerable pupils and families who may require further support during lockdown. This is being done in partnership with social work and Barnardo's. This has included the offer of time in school hubs, especially where there are concerns around pupil or family mental health and wellbeing and contact with school, staff in the hubs is seen as being an essential means to offer support. School leaders, including guidance and pastoral team staff in secondary schools, continue to make regular phone calls to identified families on a regular basis.

5.3 **Remote learning**

The Education Scotland guidance for remote learning can be accessed at <https://education.gov.scot/improvement/supporting-remote-learning/supporting-remote-learning>

Actions taken by Education services to support schools since January 2021 have included:

- Local Authority guidance produced for schools clearly outlining expectations (taking into account the national guidance)
- Two authority wide remote learning audits have taken place
- Regular briefings for Heads Of Establishments
- School / Early Years Establishment policies all in place and quality assured
- All schools gathering feedback on an ongoing basis via questionnaires
- Established team of Digital Champions including fortnightly briefing and sharing meetings
- Coaching and Modelling Officers (CMOs) recorded 200+ videos (20% of West Online content)
- CMOs have developed an ongoing professional learning offer for rest of term including 1:1 support
- Education Officers – met twice with each Head of Establishment
- Reflective and challenge questions meeting planned between Heads Of Establishment and Education Officers for February
- Training events around tracking and supporting engagement
- Cluster benchmarking meetings to share best practice
- Auditing of Education Scotland's overview of practice against Local Authority provision
- Established one stop shop for all documents and advice on a Glow Digi Blog

Education Services continue to provide ongoing support and challenge schools to develop their remote learning offer to families. All schools have now developed and shared a school policy on remote learning with parents, making their provision clear. Schools are also carrying out questionnaires for parents to feedback including pupil focus groups. Similar processes for the Learning at Home offer for children attending ELC are in place. We continue to share the outcomes of Education Scotland's scoping work relating to remote learning including recommendations being made.

Education Officers continue to meet with Heads of Establishment on a regular basis to review each school and centre's provision and policy. This will continue whilst remote learning remains in place for cohorts of pupils.

On 15 February 2021 Education Scotland held meetings with education services and head teachers to gather information and evidence around the following theme: 'Local authority approaches to assuring the quality of remote learning'.

5.4 **SQA qualifications**

At the time of writing we have had it confirmed that the date for submission of teacher estimate data has now been extended to 25 June 2021.

In addition, senior phase pupils will come into school on a part-time basis from 22 February to complete assessments linked to practical subjects. This will be split over half days in Inverclyde schools with no more than 8% of the school roll attending in each slot and with a clear focus in each subject on the areas that cannot be covered remotely.

The service has adjusted its timeline for the support and challenge for schools in moderating the data to be submitted SQA and continues to liaise with schools regarding both the timeline and procedures with each announcement released..

At this time the emphasis remains on teaching and learning whether face-to-face or remotely with guidance on assessment now focused on the latter part of the session. We continue to monitor the guidance from SQA and meet with them on a fortnightly basis.

All Councils are working closely with the SQA and guidance is issued as it becomes available. All guidance can be found at <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/95579.html>

5.5 Vaccinations for Education Staff and asymptomatic testing programme in schools and early years settings

The Scottish Government has agreed that staff carrying out certain care practices with children who have significant needs will be classed as health care staff and are entitled to a vaccination. This equates to approximately 240 staff working across all settings in Inverclyde but predominantly within Craigmarnloch School and Hillend Nursery.

The vaccinations across the GGC Health Board took place on Sunday 14 February at the Louisa Jordan Centre.

A programme of lateral flow testing began in schools and nursery classes from 10 of February 2021. All staff are offered 2 tests a week, along with all senior phase pupils returning to school. Using the tests is only one mitigation factor and remains optional for all. Where a member of staff or pupil receives a positive outcome they report this to the NHS / Public Health team and are asked to then take a full Covid test. They will also be asked to inform the Head of their establishment and contact tracing will commence.

Support to schools / ELCs is being offered in relation to understanding the administration needs of the roll out of the testing programme along with any financial support necessary to administer.

5.6 Scottish Governments Recovery grants for Education

Inverclyde will receive a £717,000 share of a £45M grant to support schools with recovery and ongoing costs relating to remote learning. The intended use of the grant is:

- Delegated powers have been used to agree that £180,000 will be sent on Wi-Fi infrastructures in some of our primary schools to support the delivery of online aspects of remote learning.
- £210,000 will be devolved to schools to support remote learning and recovery costs incurred.
- The balance will be used to support staffing of recovery teachers.
- £64,000 from the Early Learning and Childcare budget will be used to support recovery and home learning in Early Learning settings.

5.7 Education Authority Equality Mainstreaming Report 2021, Progress on Education Equality Outcomes 2017/21 and the Proposed Education Equality Outcomes 2021/25

The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, as a public body, to publish Equality Outcomes every four years and report on their progress via a Mainstreaming Report every two years. Additionally, Councils, as Education Authorities, are required to publish details specific to Education Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming activity on the same two and four year cycle. Reports require to be published by 30 April in the relevant year.

A report has been devised which covers progress made with the delivery of the Education Equality Outcomes 2017/21 since 2019. Details are also provided on the Protected Characteristic workforce profile for the Council's Education Service, covering the financial years 2018/19 and 2019/20. This report can be accessed at [Equality Mainstreaming Reports](#)

Having undertaken consultation, the proposed Education Equality Outcomes for the period 2021/25 are:

- Ensure the curriculum meets the needs of black and minority ethnic pupils

- Reduce identity-based bullying and harassment in our educational establishments
- Reduce the attainment gap for pupils with additional support needs.

5.8 **Food and nutritional guidelines for schools**

The revised nutritional requirements for food and drink in schools (Scotland) Regulations 2020 have now completed their Parliamentary journey and are due to be implemented in schools on 08 April 2021.

The school food regulations apply to all food and drink served anywhere in the school across the school day, including breakfast clubs, lunch service, tuckshops, social enterprise activities, classes where food is being used and vending machines.

To support the new requirements the Scottish Government have been working with local authority representatives, Education Scotland and other stakeholders to develop a guidance document designed to support the preparations being made for 8 April 2021.

The 'Healthy Eating in Schools' guidance was published on Wednesday 10 February 2021 and can be accessed on the Scottish Government website at the following link [Publications - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot).

6.0 **OPERATIONAL LOG**

6.1 The operational log for Education and Communities is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

7.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 **Finance**

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

7.2 **Legal**

The legal basis for the closure of schools is provided by Education Continuity Directions from the Scottish Government.

7.3 **Human Resources**

N/A.

7.4 Equalities

Equalities

(a) Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES
X	NO – This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a substantive change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required

(b) Fairer Scotland Duty

If this report affects or proposes any major strategic decision:-

Has there been active consideration of how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome?

	YES – A written statement showing how this report's recommendations reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage has been completed.
X	NO

(c) Data Protection

Has a Data Protection Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES – This report involves data processing which may result in a high risk to the rights and freedoms of individuals.
X	NO

7.5 Repopulation

N/A.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

8.1 N/A.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 N/A.

Education and Communities Committee

Operational Decision Log – Education Services

From: 29 January 2021

To: 4 February 2021

Week 4

**Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development
RB/KB**

Education, Communities & Organisational Development – OPERATIONAL LOG 2021

	Service Issue	Action taken	Reported to CMT	Supporting Report Yes – N/A	Implemented	Officer
	<u>EDUCATION SERVICES</u>					
4.	The Scottish Government announced a further grant to local councils for schools at the beginning of the second lockdown. This grant of £45M can be spent on either staffing, devices or IT support as well as family support. The grant is ring fenced and is intended to be spent by the end of June 2021. The exact amount to be awarded to Inverclyde has been confirmed as £717,000.	<p>To spend a proportion of the money on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT infrastructure in schools where this is currently causing issues - £180,000 • A devolved amount of money to schools to be spent on resources to support remote learning - £206,000 	4.2.21	Yes	4.2.21	Michael Roach

Education and Communities Committee

Operational Decision Log – Education Services

From: 5 February 2021

To: 11 February 2021

Week 5

**Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development
RB/KB**

Education, Communities & Organisational Development – OPERATIONAL LOG 2021

	Service Issue	Action taken	Reported to CMT	Supporting Report Yes – N/A	Implemented	Officer
	<u>EDUCATION SERVICES</u>					
4.	Schools Attainment Challenge: purchase of devices to support digital access for schools and learners to aid remote learning.	Utilise available Schools Attainment Challenge project plan funding of £200,000 to target and support digital access and remote learning for P4-P7 pupils who do not have access to devices at home: 600 devices for pupils and schools	9.2.21	Yes	9.2.21	Head of Education