

Our Ref LF/CR
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Dear Parent/Carer

Further to last week's announcement by the First Minister, it is positive to see such continued positive progress being made in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. I am sure we are all very much looking forward to greater freedoms and a greater sense of normality returning to our everyday lives.

With the new school term now well underway, I was very keen to write to you all once again to thank you for your ongoing support of our schools and staff at this time. I appreciate this year has not been easy and our schools continue to look and feel like very different environments as they remain subject to significant risk assessment and mitigations in relation to our ongoing efforts to live with Covid-19. Whilst it is encouraging to see such good progress being made in tackling the pandemic, life in our schools will continue to feel very different for some time to come as we hopefully move through the various Covid levels and hopefully back to a greater sense of normality.

At this time of year, schools are usually planning lots of end-of-year events to mark the end of the school year. However, once again as was the case last year, this is very challenging for our schools as the guidance they are operating within continues to evolve and change, making planning difficult. Schools will not necessarily be able to plan for the same kinds of events that they traditionally would have offered – such as leavers' proms, sports days, transition events and concerts – as a result of the ongoing mitigations required. I appreciate this may be disappointing for parents and carers, and of course for young people themselves, but the health, safety and welfare of all members of the school community must come first. Therefore, end of term events, where they do go ahead, may be very different to how they have appeared in the past. On behalf of all our schools, I would ask for the support and understanding of all parents and carers.

For your information, this link <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-reducing-the-risks-in-schools/pages/upcoming-changes/> takes you to the updated Scottish Government guidance for schools which provides specific guidance for transitions and for expressive arts and physical education.

I know this continues to be a challenging time and if you are looking for pointers on supporting positive mental health then I'd recommend having a look at our educational psychology service website: <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/as/aberdeenshireeps/> There's also plenty of tips and advice on where to access additional support at: <https://clearyourhead.scot/> The Grampian Psychological Resilience Hub also continues to offer a helpline: <https://www.nhsgrampian.org/covid-19/covid-19-public-information/subpages/mental-health-support/what-is-the-grampian-psychological-resilience-hub/> and the Grampian Coronavirus

Assistance Hub may also be helpful if you are in need of financial support or advice relating to the impact of Covid-19: <https://www.gcah.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,



Laurence Findlay
Director of Education & Children's Services