**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**For young people moving into or continuing in the senior phase in secondary schools**

During the past few months, your life will have felt very different. During this time you may have missed the company of friends and relatives. Now that aspects of “normal” life are returning, including going back into school, you may have some questions about what that might be like. As you read these questions, please remember that your teachers are working hard to ensure that you will be supported to work towards the future that you planned for before the lockdown period.

*Will I be going back into school all day every day?*

It is unlikely that things will get back to the way they were straight away. A return to school will probably be gradual. You may be asked to go into school for some of the week and complete work at home during the rest of the week. The process will take time but your learning will continue. An entitlement to an education in the senior phase will continue and you will work towards qualifications. However, the learning may not always be face to face with a teacher in a classroom. The experiences you have recently had learning at home will have prepared you for this time ahead. You can find out more about the impact of Coronavirus on education on the [Young Scot](https://tinyurl.com/covid19YSedu) website.

*Will I be able to get to school on the bus if we have to maintain physical distancing?*

The local authorities, bus companies and schools will try to ensure you are safe at all times. If you have to use public transport, it will be helpful to follow guidelines about physical distancing as recommended by Scottish Government [via the NHS](https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-distancing). It will be a good idea to consider how you can get to school safely.

*How can I spend time with my friends at school or will we have to stay apart?*

You will have opportunities to see your friends and speak with them. If you are in classes, you will have to comply with physical distancing advice. This will make your classroom environment seem a bit different but remember this new way of working protects you and your family and may help avoid people becoming ill. When you are out in the open and during breaks or rest periods, you should continue to follow Scottish Government physical distancing advice.

*How can we maintain physical distancing in a class when there are thirty of us in a small space?*

It is likely that class sizes will be reduced and movement around the school and certain activities in class will be restricted. Your teachers will ensure that the space in the classrooms will be adjusted to ensure that everyone follows Scottish Government physical distancing advice.

*I have not really been doing any school learning during lockdown. Will I be really far behind when I go back to school? I am worried that I will never catch up.*

Everyone has been doing their best to learn at home and many have been able to access online work, materials and resources at the right level for them. This has not been possible for everyone and for some people, the learning has not been directly linked to the curriculum. Learning has been more practical and skills based, such as cooking at home, exercising, making contact with family and friends online, and reading a variety of texts. These are all important skills to develop.

Your teachers will focus on your needs when school life begins again. You will be supported to begin to access learning, whatever your experience of lockdown has been. This may mean a bit more learning at home or getting better access to online work with the support of the school. Whatever your experience has been during lockdown, your teachers will ensure that your transition will be as smooth as possible and you are able to progress into your appropriate courses and level of study. The [Young Scot website](https://young.scot/) offers advice on how your mobile data and broadband may be affected by Covid-19 and explains some supports that have been put in place.

*I have lost a relative or friend during lockdown. I am feeling really down – who can I talk to about it?*

Tragically, this has happened to many families. You may have spoken to your close friends or family and if you feel that you need to talk to a member of staff in your school about this, your teachers are there to help. You can speak to your Pastoral Care/Guidance Teacher and they can help you to deal with these feelings and offer you ways to cope, particularly during this challenging time. You can also read more about grief, bereavement and the COVID-19 outbreak on [Young Scot](https://young.scot/get-informed/national/grief-bereavement-and-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak).

*Will I still be able to undertake my options and then start the new classes as normal?*

You may not be able to access all the classes you wanted, or you may have to access some of your learning in different ways. However, everyone will try their best to ensure that you are able to take the subjects you want to help you to follow the pathway to a positive future destination.

*Will there still be options in the senior phase for attending college part time?*

Schools are working closely with key partners to ensure that as many options as possible are open to young people from S4 to S6. Some of the courses and programmes which were previously on offer in local colleges may have to be modified or adapted to suit the new circumstances and Scottish government guidance. If you need to review your options the [My World of Work](https://tinyurl.com/myWOWpupils) website and [Plan It](https://www.planitplus.net/) both offer helpful advice. Similarly, work experience programmes may not be readily available to all young people, as employers may not be in a position to offer placements during this time. However, if you have a work experience placement which is self-found, you should discuss this with school staff when school resumes. This is to check that all health and safety conditions are met.

*How can we take part in our practical subjects, such as drama, IT, music and PE classes, for example, if we are physical distancing?*

Your teachers are working hard to develop some creative solutions to these issues so that all young people can access the senior phase when schools reopen. Some subjects involve working in pairs and groups and problem solving in teams and this will undoubtedly present challenges. Teachers will ensure that you can access the curriculum as fully and as meaningfully as possible while adhering to Scottish Government guidelines on physical distancing.

*I usually get support for learning. I was not able to manage all the work I was given during lockdown. What can I do?*

Young people across the country have been trying their best to do the work that their teachers issued during the lockdown period. If you have a key teacher in Pupil Support/Support for Learning, they will be able to help discuss this with you and with your other teachers. If there are particular things you want to get some help with when you return, there will be support available for you from the Pupil Support/ Support for Learning staff, support assistants and your class teachers.

*Will I be able to access the range of opportunities to enable me to get qualifications and go to college/university/ get a good job?*

There is a lot of work being undertaken in schools, local authorities and across Scotland to try to ensure that you do not miss opportunities, either now or in the future. Every young person will be supported to work towards the future that they planned for before the lockdown period. Every young person’s aspirations are important and your school and your teachers will help you access the pathway you had planned. Further support is available on the [My World of Work website](https://tinyurl.com/myWOWpupils) or speak to a Careers Advisor using the Live Chat function on the website or by calling **0800 917 8000** (Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm). If you were due to sit exams in May, the SQA have provided guidance for schools, parents and young people on their website to outline the process for awards this year.

*What can I do if I think I would have done better in a final exam and disagree with the grade I am awarded in August?*

Communication with the school is very important both at this time and when your results are issued in August. As usual, staff will be available by phone or online to discuss any concerns that you may have. Further information is available from the [SQA](https://tinyurl.com/SQAlearner) . Additionally, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) offer considerable support, advice and guidance to young people about possible future pathways.

You may find the links below helpful if you want to find out more information about qualifications, careers, your rights, health and wellbeing:

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| **Theme** | **Hyperlink** |
| General information | [Young Scot](https://young.scot/campaigns/national/coronavirus) |
| Learning, qualifications and careers | [SQA](https://tinyurl.com/SQAlearner) Information for learners |
| Planning for future learning and careers –[Plan It](https://www.planitplus.net/) |
| [My World of Work](https://tinyurl.com/myWOWpupils) Contact a careers advisor using online live chat or phone 0800 917 8000 |
| [SDS](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/)– career guidance and apprenticeship information |
| Your rights, health and wellbeing | [Children and Young People Commissioner](https://cypcs.org.uk/)– help and advice on children and young people’s human rights |
| [Young Scot](https://young.scot/campaigns/national/young-carers) – support for young carers |
| [Reach](https://reach.scot/) – support for learning and mental health |
| [Childline](https://www.childline.org.uk/) |
| Young minds - 24/7 text support – text YM to 85258  Mind for better mental health – call the helpline on 0300 123 3393 |