**Frequently Asked Questions:**

**For parents and carers of young people moving into or continuing in the senior phase in secondary schools**

As your child was approaching the final term of S3, S4 or S5, arrangements for a nationwide lockdown were put in place, to prevent the transmission of Covid-19 across the population. This resulted in young people learning at home, accessing their work through online platforms, websites and areas of social media. As parents or carers, many of you have become much more involved in day-to-day learning with your children, either directly through engagement with their work, or by encouraging and supporting them. There are many factors, including anxieties about the lockdown that had an impact on children accessing and completing their work.  As you begin to prepare your child to return to school as an S4, S5, or S6 learner, you may have some concerns. We have provided a number of frequently asked questions and responses to those here, which you may find useful.

*What if my child has not been managing to access or complete their work? Will they be behind others and not able to access the curriculum?*

Schools are very aware that young people have been accessing the curriculum in different ways; in some cases, learners have had problems accessing their work online and this may have caused them anxiety, as they prepare to return to school. Staff are working to ensure that the curriculum will be focussed on the recovery back into school life and on meeting the needs of all young people. The relationships that your child has built with staff during their time in school and their relationships with friends will support them as they return to school life.

*My child was in S4/S5/S6 last session and did not sit the exams in May. How are they going to be assessed?*

This year, National Qualification results will be based on teacher estimates, rather than external examinations. Your child’s teacher used their knowledge of their performance across the year to make an informed judgement of their achievement, based on robust evidence. You can find out more about this process on the Scottish Qualifications Authority’s website: [SQA support page for parents and carers](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/93825.html).

*What if I am unhappy or disagree with the result from SQA that my child receives through the post in August?*

If there are any concerns about results received in August, parents and young people should contact their school in the first instance. The school’s SQA coordinator will be able to provide further details of the appeals service offered by the SQA.

*What if the results my child achieves do not match up to what their preferred college, university or potential employer is looking for?*

The SQA have issued guidance based on their discussion with key stakeholders. Further details are available [here.](https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/70972.html)

*We had a bereavement during the lockdown period and my child is struggling to cope. How will the school be able to help them?*

Highly skilled staff will ensure that children who have experienced bereavement or trauma during the lockdown period are well supported. Young people already have key staff with whom they have built positive relationships with and who they feel they can trust. The external agencies who support children and young people in schools will still be available to support your child during this period of transition. For example, psychological services and staff trained in Scottish Mental Health First Aid will be able to offer crucial support. Importantly, parents and carers should let the school know if they have a concern about their child at any time. Working in partnership and keeping clear and open communication with the school will help everyone make as smooth a transition as possible during the initial weeks and months of the senior phase. Education Scotland has produced materials and resources regarding health and wellbeing during transitions that may offer guidance and support to you. Further information and support is available here:

[Young Scot](https://young.scot/get-informed/national/grief-bereavement-and-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak) – advice for children and young people

[Parent Club](https://www.parentclub.scot/articles/coping-bereavement-during-coronavirus) – advice on how to talk to children and young people about bereavement

*How will the school manage physical distancing, additional hand washing and the avoidance of transmission?*

This is something that schools and local authorities are planning for now. It is likely that a return to school will be phased or ‘staggered’ in some way. Additional opportunities in line with Scottish government guidance will be built into the school day to ensure transmission is avoided. If you are concerned for your child’s wellbeing during social time, please make contact with the school for further information on how this will be managed. Schools will also manage social time in line with Scottish Government guidelines.

*I feel my child undertook no real learning while they were at home. Will this impact their future prospects for success?*

School staff appreciate that not all households have internet access or devices with which to access online materials and resources. They also appreciate that a large number of parents and carers will have struggled to get their child to engage in meaningful learning for a variety of reasons, including trauma, bereavement and anxiety. Schools will continue to undertake significant work to ensure that no child misses out on any opportunity, 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.

*Will my child be able to take all the subjects they have chosen?*

Schools are preparing to deliver as full a curriculum as possible, adhering to Scottish Government guidance on physical distancing. While this will require some possible adaptation to the delivery of the curriculum, with a blend of face to face and online work, schools will work to ensure teaching and learning across a range of subjects.

*If my child cannot take all the subjects they chose, which subjects will be available?*

Teachers are working to develop creative solutions to these issues so that learners can access as full a curriculum as possible when schools reopen. Some subjects involve working in pairs and groups, or problem solving in teams and this will undoubtedly present challenges. Staff will ensure that learners can access the curriculum as fully and as meaningfully as possible while adhering to [Scottish Government guidelines](https://tinyurl.com/NHSdistance) on physical distancing.

*What happens if my child does not have access to the IT equipment they need to access the online learning?*

Schools will work with you to ensure that every child has adequate access to the technology they will require to access their curriculum as fully as possible.

*How will the school advise me of my child’s progress during this year? For example, will there be parents' evenings, so that I can speak to my child’s teachers?*

Schools will make individual arrangements and the ways in which this reporting will happen may look and feel different, depending on any guidance put in place by local authorities, or by Scottish Government. Schools will still prioritise regular communications with parents/carers, so that they can maximise every young person’s potential achievement and success.

*My child had opted to go to university/college or into employment after the summer of 2020. Will they still be able to do this?*

The COVID-19 lockdown has given a lot of young people time to reflect on their decisions about future pathways. The key is to keep communications open with the school, particularly with pastoral care/guidance teachers who will be able to advise your child on next steps. Universities and colleges will also be able to provide significant and up-to-date support.

*My child opted to do a college course two afternoons per week in the coming session. Will this still be an option?*

While some of these arrangements and programmes may have to be adapted and modified, there will still be opportunities for learning through college provision.

**Useful Links For Parents:**

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| [Parentzone Scotland](https://education.gov.scot/parentzone)  – advice and information from Education Scotland on schools and your child’s learning |
| [Parentclub](https://www.parentclub.scot/) – advice from Scottish Government on your child’s health and education |
| [National Parent Forum of Scotland](https://www.npfs.org.uk/)  – “In a nutshell” guides |
| [Parenting Across Scotland](https://www.parentingacrossscotland.org/info-for-families/coronavirus/) – information for you and your family |
| Young Minds Helpline for Parents - 0808 802 5544 |

If you have any concerns regarding your child’s transition please speak to the school.