

**ALL EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION FROM THE HEAD OF FM & HUMAN RESOURCES - COVID-19,
NO 37, 5 JANUARY 2021**

This message contains important information, following the First Minister's announcement of further COVID-19 related restrictions.

I hope that this latest briefing finds you and your family well and that you enjoyed some time away from work over the festive period. Although 2020 was a very challenging year, where you all responded magnificently in the most trying of circumstances, 2021 is going to be no less challenging, at least in the short-term until the vaccine is rolled-out.

This was illustrated by the First Minister's announcement yesterday that enhanced restrictions were to take effect from midnight on Monday 4 January 2021.

The First Minister announced that all schools and nurseries will remain closed until at least 1 February 2021 to all pupils, except vulnerable children and children of key workers.

As you will already be aware, the service we provide is a Client-led service and we are required to respond to the needs of our Clients in each of the Local Authority areas. At present the Client is expecting a full complement of Tayside Contracts' school-based employees to attend work as scheduled. I am currently liaising with representatives in each of the Councils to confirm their requirements going forward and will provide further information as it becomes available.

The current position is as follows for all employees who are fit and able to work e.g., who are not ill, self-isolating but cannot work from home or shielding (please refer to the specific paragraph below for advice and guidance on shielding).

ALL SCHOOL BASED FACILITIES SERVICES DIVISION EMPLOYEES

Angus Area

All catering, cleaning, janitorial and school crossing patrol employees should return to their normal place of work on Wednesday 6 January 2021.

Dundee/Perth & Kinross Area

All catering, cleaning, janitorial and school crossing patrol employees should return to their normal place of work on Thursday 7 January 2021.

NON-SCHOOL BASED EMPLOYEES

Non-school Based Cleaning Employees

Some non-essential office buildings may not be permitted to open due to the enhanced restrictions. You should attend work as normal unless advised otherwise by your line manager.

Non-school Based Catering Employees (Community Meals)

There are no changes necessary as the provision of community meals is an essential service. Therefore, please continue to attend work as normal.

Previously Shielding Employees

Employees who were previously shielding and have been issued with, or expect to be issued with, a letter from the Chief Medical Officer, should **NOT** attend work. If you have the ability to carry out your work from home, you are expected to do so but otherwise there is no requirement for you to attend work. You should forward a copy of your letter from the Chief Medical Officer to your line manager, this will act as a Fit Note to cover the period of your absence.

If you were previously self-isolating on advice from your GP but did not receive a letter from the Chief Medical Officer, you are permitted to attend work as normal with the necessary control measures in place. If you fall into this category and are concerned about attending work, please contact your line manager to discuss the matter further.

Parents/Guardians of Shielding Children

If you are the parent or guardian of a child who was previously shielding and has been issued with, or expects to be issued with, a letter from the Chief Medical Officer and cannot attend work because you are required to care for your child, please contact your line manager and forward on a copy of the letter to them which will act as a Fit Note to cover the period of your absence.

Childcare

If the closure of the schools/nurseries for all children (except vulnerable children or children of key workers), presents you with a childcare issue and you have explored all reasonable alternatives for childcare, please contact your line manager to discuss your specific circumstances further. It may be that you can request to take annual leave or opt to change your working pattern temporarily to allow you to attend work. A decision will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that all Tayside Contracts' school-based employees are classed as key workers and can continue to send their children to school when alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made. You are required to apply for this provision through your school or Local Authority.

Keeping Each Other Safe

I am sure you are all as concerned as I am about the report by the First Minister of the impact of the COVID-19 variant which appears to be up to 70% more transmissible than the original strain of the virus. Please be assured that the health, safety and wellbeing of our workforce remains our primary concern and we will ensure that all reasonable steps are taken to protect our employees at work. With this in mind, I encourage you to adhere to the rules and guidance both in and outside of your workplace that are in place to for your protection.

Should you have any questions about this briefing please speak to your line manager or if you are seeking support for a wellbeing issue this can be accessed through your line manager, our HR Team or via the wellbeing resources published on our website [here](#).

Please continue to refer to Tayside Contracts' website <https://www.tayside-contracts.co.uk/covid-19> on a regular basis to check for further updates.

If you have not already done so and wish to provide your email address to us in order to benefit from electronic access to communications such as these, please forward your email address to Communications@tayside-contracts.co.uk We will not forward your email address onto any third parties or use it for any other purpose other than to communicate with you.

Frank Reilly, Head of FM and Human Resources, 5 January 2021

