

## **COMMUNICATION TO ALL SCHOOL AND EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE SETTINGS BASED FSD EMPLOYEES FROM THE HEAD OF FM & HUMAN RESOURCES, COVID-19, 5 FEBRUARY 2021, No. 43**

**This message contains important information following the First Minister's announcement on 2 February 2021 regarding the intended phased return of specific school pupils to onsite learning from 22 February 2021 and to the roll out of asymptomatic testing for school and early learning and childcare setting based employees.**

I hope that this latest briefing finds you and your family well.

### **Intended Phased Return**

On 2 February 2021, the First Minister announced that the Scottish Government intends to start phasing children to back school and early learning and childcare settings from 22 February 2021 on the following basis:

- Firstly, a full time return of early learning and childcare for all children below school age;
- secondly, a full time return to school for pupils in primaries 1 - 3; and
- thirdly, 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.

This is the intended approach but the First Minister did stress that this is dependent upon continued progress being made in suppressing the virus and it is subject to final confirmation on 16 February 2021.

Operationally for Tayside Contracts' employees, this will mean that once again we will have to adjust the numbers of our employees working within these settings to take account of this phased returned. Your manager will inform you how this will impact on you.

For those of our employees who received a letter from the CMO and are shielding, this does not change anything for you and you are still required to shield and not attend work until further notice.

### **Asymptomatic Testing for School and Early Learning and Childcare Setting Based Employees**

In addition to announcing the basis of the phased return, the First Minister also announced that a programme of asymptomatic testing was being rolled out to all school and early learning and childcare setting employees.

This testing will be offered in the form of 'at-home' testing twice a week using Lateral Flow Devices (LFD) provided by the Scottish Government. This testing offer will be in place for school-based employees as soon as possible after the testing kits are delivered to each school location across Tayside and all the necessary steps have been taken to facilitate this roll out.

Testing will be voluntary but given that the aim of testing is to help break the chains of transmission of the virus, all employees are encouraged to participate in this programme for the safety of themselves and others.

We are currently liaising with our colleagues in the 3 constituent Councils to discuss how this will operate in practice for our employees and it is our intention to provide further information and detail next week.

It is important even at this stage for employees to note that this asymptomatic testing programme does not and will not replace current guidance for those with symptoms or those identified as a close contact of a positive case. Anyone with symptoms, whether they are involved in this programme or not, should book a free NHS test and follow government self-isolation guidance until the results of their test are known. People with symptoms must not rely on a negative LFD result to continue to attend work. Testing also does not replace basic preventative measures such as regular handwashing, PPE and social distancing.

Should you have any questions about any of content of this briefing please speak to your line manager or a member of our HR Team.

Please continue to refer to Tayside Contracts' website [www.tayside-contracts.co.uk](http://www.tayside-contracts.co.uk) 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](mailto: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 February 2021**

