

EE52. Children's Services – Update on Schools and Early Years Establishments Reopening

The Emergency Executive considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided a summary of the overall position regarding the reopening of schools and the ongoing health and safety monitoring arrangements.

Following changes to the Scottish Government's Reopening Guidance, the Emergency Executive agreed on 6 August 2020 that pupils would return on a soft start basis between Wednesday 12 August and Friday 14 August 2020, with a full return on Monday 17 August 2020.

Transport arrangements were in place and operating to ensure all children were transported safely to school. The updated social distancing guidance that applied within schools and to school transport effectively negated the high risks previously highlighted with regard to the potential shortage of bus capacity.

In line with the guidance all education establishments completed individual risk assessments prior to reopening. Proactive joint working with the Trade Unions enabled the risk assessments to be considered, reviewed and agreed. The Service had also agreed a joint process with the Trade Unions to enable risk assessments to be updated, if national guidance changed and reported regularly to trade union partnership meetings.

School Recovery Plans were updated to reflect updated Scottish Government and Public Health Guidance and communication protocols and processes to be followed in the event of COVID related whole or partial school closures. Schools would only be closed due to COVID related incidents on instruction from Public Health.

Decision

The Emergency Executive noted:-

- (1) the work undertaken by officers from Children's Services, Development Services and the Trade Unions in ensuring that the building pre-opening checks and individual establishment risk assessments were completed to allow establishments to reopen as planned, and**
- (2) the additional funding received to date, to support the additional costs associated with the reopening of schools as set out in section 4.4 of the report.**