

The Midlothian Promise

Over the last few weeks our primary and secondary schools have been working on a return to school in August.

The central principle that our schools are working from is that all school recovery plans must comply with public health advice to ensure all learners, staff and parents/carers are safe when we do return. As we move through Scotland's Routemap through and out of the crisis our schools are planning, including contingency planning, with the information provided nationally to do so.

Therefore, agreed principles will provide the necessary consistency across our local authority and provide a clear and transparent basis for schools to make their local, school by school, decisions on an August reopening.

However, as Midlothian Council recognises that our schools are different, the following key principles are what all schools have agreed to work from as they prepare for an August return. This work will inevitably result in school by school differences in the learner experience. These are likely to be most apparent in our secondary schools due subject specialisms of our teaching staff and their availability in individual schools.

Nevertheless, we believe that these principles, and associated collegiate working between schools, will support school leaders to make the best decisions they can in the circumstances we find ourselves in

The 'Midlothian Promise'

1. All Midlothian schools will prioritise the safety of children and young people, staff and parents/carers as we plan and implement school recovery
2. All Midlothian schools, for session 2020/21, will adopt a common values base to support consistent decision making at a local/school level; Safe, Fair, Ethical, Clear and Realistic
3. All Midlothian schools will base approaches to the Health and Well Being of children, young people and staff on Building Resilience and Nurture
4. All Midlothian schools will apply a consistent social distancing and cleaning/hygiene plan, including PPE as appropriate
5. All Midlothian schools and ELC settings will adopt a 'maximalist' approach; with as many children and young people as possible returning to ELC and school as soon as it is safe
6. All Midlothian schools will establish and maintain clear communication channels to inform, and build confidence in, all our children and young people, staff and parents/carers
7. From Thursday 13th August 2020 almost all Midlothian children and young people will experience a 'blended approach' to support their learning; this means time in school and time at home following e-learning programmes
8. All school-age Midlothian children and young people can request access to a 'device' and support to facilitate blended learning

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9. All Midlothian schools will prioritise in-school learning for those with the greatest need; ie ASN, vulnerable families, young people's achievement and attainment that is likely to be affected by equity issues (in effect the GIRFEC resilience matrix)
10. All Midlothian schools will follow our key principles as outlined within the blended learning guidance to ensure where possible a consistent experience for Midlothian students
11. All Midlothian secondary schools will collaborate on planning and implementation of approaches to 'blended learning' in the Senior Phase to ensure where possible a consistent experience for Midlothian students; this will allow each school to achieve a robust evidence base for assessment and certification
12. Each school will develop their own data informed blended learning rationale and implementation plan, to cover August to December 2020, that reflects the above principles and best meets the needs of their children and young people in their local school context