

**Date** 11 December 2020

**Your ref**

**Our ref** IP/JR

Dear Parent / Carer,

### **School Christmas Holidays 2020**

I write to you following the Scottish Government decision not to issue a blanket instruction to Local Authorities to amend their school Christmas Holiday arrangements.

There had been a suggestion that the Council should consider a request to move to remote learning particularly for the final two days of term before Christmas. It has been agreed at a meeting attended by representatives of all the political parties on the Council, after discussion of the views expressed both in favour and against, to abide by the advice of the Scottish Government's health advisors. Public Health advice states schools should stay open as the controlled school environment is preferable to social mixing outside of schools if schools are closed early. Being in school, according to the Chief Social Work Advisor in Scotland, is a very significant protection factor for children.

We were also concerned that changing school holiday dates at this late stage would inconvenience working families, single parents and carers with childcare arrangements. The short notice also makes it impossible to adequately consult with parents and carers to ascertain their views, which would be our normal practice.

There is no doubt the relatively low numbers of positive Covid-19 test results in our schools is a testament to the tremendous work all our staff in schools have been undertaking since August. I can confirm that arrangements are being put in place to ensure staff in schools will have their well-deserved holiday uninterrupted by needing to be involved in the administration of the Track and Trace activity when schools close as planned on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020.

Finally, may I wish all our children, young people, staff and families have a restful and safe Christmas holiday.

Kind regards



**Ian Perry**

**Convener, Education Children and Families Committee**