



the National Parent
Forum of Scotland

Supporting Learning During Term 4 – A Guide for Parents and Carers

Introduction

The National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) is an organisation made up of parents for parents. NPFS is a group of parent representatives from each Local Authority in Scotland, and we are committed to ensuring that parents are engaged, involved and empowered in their children's education. Parents are the primary educators of their children, and we teach them, guide them, and support them. This has perhaps never been truer than during the current coronavirus outbreak. These are unprecedented and challenging times for all of us, and as a group of parents, we know how the uncertainty of coronavirus and the school closures can impact all aspects of your child's and family's lives. We know how important it is for parents to have the information they need to be able to be fully involved in their child's education and to have their views represented and heard. This is why we have worked with the Scottish Government to bring you the latest information regarding Term 4 (Summer Term).

We understand that the current coronavirus pandemic and the closure of schools to protect our children and families has created many challenges for schools, teachers, parents and learners. The response of Scotland's children and young people, parents and families, and schools and teachers has been extraordinary, and they have adapted to the changes with incredible speed. We want all parents and carers to know that the work that they are doing to support their children's learning and well-being whilst adapting to the current circumstances is both recognised and valued and that further support is available to them if it is needed.

With term 4 starting, we know that parents will have many questions about what learning will look like up until the summer and how their children will continue to be supported during this time. Unfortunately, due to the constantly changing situation we face some of these questions do not currently have answers. The Scottish Government do not yet know for certain when or how schools in Scotland will reopen but at the moment it is clear that, for the majority of learners, most or all of term 4 will be completed at home.

In this guide we will answer many of the key questions that we know parents and carers will have about their children's learning in term 4. We will continue to listen to parents and carers, and work with the Scottish Government to update this guidance based on your feedback. The guidance will also be updated as and when new information about school closures and other changes becomes available.

Most importantly we want all parents and carers to know that no one expects you to

become teachers and the Scottish Government understands that there are limits to what anyone can do to support their children's learning at home.

The focus will be on supporting learners, families, and teachers to manage the challenging circumstances they face and to continue to work together to support all of our children and young people.

Learning at home and differences between schools and local authorities

It is important for all parents and carers to know that while this document sets out what work is happening to support learning in term 4, this may happen in different ways across schools and local authorities. This is because education in Scotland is delivered by local councils and individual areas and schools will work in different ways to best meet the needs of the communities they serve.

The role of parents and carers in learning at home

Parents and carers are one of the first and most important influences in their children's lives. Parents and carers have always played a central part in their children's lives and the closure of schools due to the coronavirus outbreak has highlighted the importance role that they play even further.

That doesn't mean that parents are now also expected to be teachers.

The most important thing is to make sure that your children and your family are safe and supported to cope with the challenging circumstances. During term 4 parents and carers can play an important role in keeping their children and young people engaged in learning, whilst also supporting their well-being. Your school will support this by providing learning materials, advice and feedback to help parents support their children's learning at home. This will not be the same as what children learn at school and parents are not expected to deliver 'lessons' that their children would receive at school. It is important to remember that this is not business as usual. Do not be hard on yourselves. In these circumstances we will all be experiencing the school closures differently due to our individual family's experiences and needs, and the Scottish Government recognises this.

Schools will also be able to support the wellbeing of children and families and will make specific arrangements for vulnerable children and children with additional support needs. All schools will make arrangements which meet the needs of individual children and young people and are appropriate for their age, ability, and circumstances.

More information about where to find extra support and information about learning at home can be found in the 'important links' annex at the end of this document.

Expectations for term 4

The current situation of school closures is unprecedented, but we expect that for the vast majority of pupils, at least the start of Term 4 will be experienced from home.

Below we have set out some of the support that you can expect in term 4 and the ways local authorities, schools, and teachers will be asked to support your child and their learning during the term. These are expectations, not instructions, as there is an understanding that Local Authorities, Schools and Communities know their children and young people best and will work in different ways to achieve the same results.

- **Learning at Home**

The Scottish Government understands that these are extraordinary times and Term 4 will be different, realising that a key goal in this period will be to maintain engagement in learning, whilst supporting their well-being.

Digital Learning

Many parents will already be familiar with their child's school using digital and online learning, such as through Glow or Digilearn. Schools and local Authorities will continue to use these tools to help pupils learn at home. They are also working to make sure that while online all children and young people will be safe and protected and that any online tools used by schools are suitable for learning.

Supporting all learners and families

The Scottish Government also know that not everyone will have access to digital learning for a variety of reasons and that this will affect some learners and families more than others. To reduce the impact of this they have asked schools and local authorities to make sure that no family or learner is left behind. Some schools and local authorities are already doing excellent work. Examples of this have included providing laptops and tablets to support digital learning at home or delivering books and learning materials to children. The Scottish Government and its education partners will continue to make sure this work continues during term 4.

Children with additional support needs

The Scottish Government recognises that children with additional support needs (ASN), their parents, and families may find learning at home particularly challenging. They do expect that wherever children can learn safely at home they should, however where this is not possible some children and young people may be able to access childcare provided by their local authority. Each child's needs and circumstances will be different and schools and local authorities will be able to offer further guidance and support. More information on ASN support at can be found in the 'important links' annex at the end of this guide.

Important Transitions

For children and young people who will be moving to different stages of learning or work such as between P7 and S1 this may be a particularly anxious time. Local authorities, head teachers and teachers are experienced and skilled in leading transition arrangements locally. For Term 4, and looking ahead to the next session, they are considering new and innovative approaches to transition. This will consider a range of factors, including the challenges faced by young people who have been particularly affected by the coronavirus. This could be due to illness or bereavement, the impact of social isolation or experiencing poverty for the first time.

- **Parental Involvement and Engagement**

Importance of parents and carers

With children learning at home, it is clear just how important parents and carers are to their children. The Scottish Government are clear that parents are not expected to be teachers, and we will continue to make sure all parents and families know this. Focusing on well-being and engaging in children's learning and development at home with the support from teachers and schools will be the important focus for parents in term 4.

Schools communicating to parents and reporting on children's progress

Schools will be expected to continue to communicate to parents and carers about their child's progress and development during term 4. This may need to be done differently to how it is usually carried out. For example, parents may not be able to attend a parents' night at their child's school due to public health guidance. Despite this, the current situation could be an opportunity for communication to be improved through new methods of keeping you informed of your child's progress. Methods for keeping you involved and informed will continue to be developed in term 4.

Schools and school staff will continue to engage with parents and parents are able to contact their children's school to receive the advice and support they need. We will work with the Scottish Government, local authorities and parent organisations to ensure that parents continue to be able to get in touch with schools when they need to do so and that schools and teachers are providing information to parents in a way which is clear and can be accessed by all.

Parent Councils

Parent Councils are encouraged to continue to operate during term 4. This means that even while schools are closed, the Parent Council should try to work with parents to make sure that they have all of the information they need about their children's learning. We know that many Parent Councils are active online and are able to communicate with their headteachers and other school staff in different ways while schools are closed. Parent Councils should continue to contact their schools if they receive direct questions from the wider parent forum although it may take longer than usual for a response.

More information and advice about parental involvement and engagement can be found in the 'important links' annex at the end of this guide.

- **Support for Teachers and School Leaders**

Finally, the Scottish Government and NPFS know how important our teachers and schools are in ensuring that learning can continue during term 4 wherever possible. They will be supported throughout term 4 with ongoing support and advice as we adapt to the coronavirus outbreak. Education Scotland will provide advice and support to teachers and schools covering topics including digital learning, health, and well-being.

Summary

This is a challenging time, and term 4 will not be like any other term experienced by our children and families before.

We appreciate parents will continue to have questions about their children's learning and wellbeing and we will continue to work closely with the Scottish Government to update and provide further information and advice as the term progresses.



www.parentforumscotland.org

enquiries@parentforumscotland.org

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Important Links - Further advice and support for parents, carers, and families

General Information:

- **Gov.Scot:** The main website for the Scottish Government contains the latest advice for parents and families on a range of important topics including information on learning and school closures. <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Health:

- **Ready Scotland:** Advice on preparing for an emergency and how to access or provide support and assistance for those most in need in our communities. <https://www.readyscotland.org/coronavirus/>
- **NHS Inform:** The latest guidance and advice about COVID-19 from NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government, including social distancing and stay at home advice. <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>
- **Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH):** For advice on supporting your mental health and well-being during the coronavirus outbreak. <https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/self-help-and-wellbeing/coronavirus-information-hub>

Information and Support for Parents and Families:

- **Parent Club Scotland:** The Scottish Government's advice and support service to parents and families. Wide range of advice, hints and tips on social distancing, health information as well as learning at home. www.parentclub.scot/
- **Parentline Scotland:** Open 7 days a week to offer free advice and support to parents. Call 08000 28 22 33 Monday to Friday 9am-9pm, and Saturday-Sunday 9am -12 noon.
- **National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFs):** The NPFs has developed a list of activities, wellbeing, and education resources for parents and families which it will continue to update. The website also has parent dedicated information about Scottish Education in their 'In a nutshell' series. <https://www.npfs.org.uk>
- **Parenting Across Scotland:** General parenting advice and support on a range of issues, <https://www.parentingacrossscotland.org/>
- **Connect:** Advice tailored to Parent Councils and support for parents groups and representatives. <https://connect.scot/news/coronavirus-advice-parent-groups>
- **Young Scot:** Advice and support on a range of issues for young people and their families. <https://young.scot/>

Education Resources and information:

- **SQA:** The official website of the Scottish Qualifications Authority contains the latest advice and guidance on qualifications, assessment and awards for learners, parents and families. <https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/70972.html>
- **Parentzone Scotland:** part of the Education Scotland family of websites, contains a range of learning resources for all ages and is a key source of general advice on learning at home, health and wellbeing and general parenting and family support. <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/learning-at-home/>
- **National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFs) Educational Resources:** A list of resources updated regularly for ideas and activities for learning at home. <https://www.npfs.org.uk/2020/03/19/school-closures-educational-resources-for-parents-and-families/>

Additional Support for Learning:

- **Enquire:** Information and advice and resources for parents and families of children with additional support needs <https://enquire.org.uk/>
- **Pupil Inclusion Network Scotland:** provides advice to parents and carers of vulnerable or excluded children <http://www.pinscotland.org/index.html>
- **CALL Scotland:** provides information and resources to help children and young people to overcome barriers to learning. <https://www.callscotland.org.uk/home/>
- **REACH:** provides information, support, and advice about the changes to education due to COVID-19 for young people with additional support needs. <https://reach.scot/get-help/coronavirus/>