

[Weir announces changes to schools` reopening arrangements | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk)

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope that you have had a safe and restful Christmas and I wish you a Happy New Year, let's all hope that 2021 brings better times!

You will see attached the information from Department of Education about schools reopening, this varies across the sector, and Mr Weir has decided that special schools will reopen next week. Today I have received further guidance from EA around the outworking of this.

Mon 4 January – School will be closed for pupils to allow for planning for learning and updating of COVID procedures for a safe return (As per EA guidance). Your child's class teacher will be in contact via See-Saw or phone call.

Tues 5 January - school will reopen for pupils – transport and school meals will be available.

We do understand however that many of you may be concerned about your child returning to school in the current circumstances with the increase in Covid cases and the new variant. To reassure you, if your child is not able to attend because of these concerns they will still be marked present using a DE supplied Covid code as long as you have corresponded with the school to inform us.

If you are NOT planning to send your child to school for now, please inform the class teacher via See-Saw, by sending an email to info@hillcroftschoo.co.uk, or by calling the school office on Monday morning. I also ask that you inform your bus/taxi driver or escort directly that transport is not required to avoid unnecessary journeys.

I remind you that your child should NOT come to school if anyone in your household displays symptoms of Covid, has tested positive or is isolating. If your child is showing any signs of other illness, such as a heavy cold, tummy bug etc we urge you to keep them at home to avoid the spread of any infection. We will make the decision to send your child home if s/he displays symptoms of illness which could spread easily around the class bubble.

We remain in a global pandemic where cases are high, and therefore, we cannot provide the "business as usual" that we once knew prior to Covid. We aim to have classes open and operating in bubbles as before, however, we cannot rule out the possibility that bubbles may need to remain at home at certain times if identified as close contacts and required to isolate, or if insufficient staff are available to maintain the bubble safely.

Thank you for your continued support as we work with you to maintain a safe and happy school for all.

Take good care

Roz McFeeters