

People Services Portfolio

Education and Skills

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Dear parents/carers,

I very much understand how challenging the last few months have been for us all and would like to place on record a thank you for all that you are doing to support the city's efforts. It is vital that we continue to do all that we can to keep each other safe and well, to reduce transmission of COVID-19, to safeguard the health and care system, to get education back up and running, and to get the city's economy going. Balancing all of those needs is a difficult task.

As we approach the end of term I wanted to write to you to talk about the summer and the start of the new school year in September.

As you will know the government has set out its position for a full return of pupils in September. Alongside this the government announced that schools would be expected to close over the summer holiday period.

We believe there is a real need in the childcare and education sector to pause for both a well-earned break where it is possible for them to do so, and to prepare for September. Settings and schools have remained open to the children of key workers and vulnerable pupils consistently from when lockdown was introduced back in March. This has involved provision during both term time and holiday periods, in setting and at home. Staff now need time to plan and to prepare for full opening in September. This will include settings having to implement new guidance to help protect children, young people and staff. Therefore over the coming weeks we will be supporting settings to prepare for a successful restart in September.

We recognise that settings not being open over the school holiday period may provide a challenge for some of our families – for keyworkers who have been accessing provision during the pandemic and for families who usually rely on their wider family and friends for childcare during the summer break.

We are therefore seeking to support families by providing an additional signpost through the Council website for childcare options during the summer break. This is available on the COVID-19 section of the Sheffield City Council website at the link below and we will be trying to add further as we go along.

www.sheffield.gov.uk/home/your-city-council/coronavirus-support-for-people

As we look to September I recognise that things will continue to be very different. Before the start of the new academic year we will write to you to provide you with an update and to advise on how we can continue to do all that we can to minimise risk and reduce virus transmission. We are committed locally to schools and settings opening in September and will be working hard over the coming weeks to carefully plan and put things in place.

Thank you once again for your understanding, support and your approach to what has been a really challenging and unprecedented few months.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Jones', written in a cursive style.

Andrew Jones
Director of Education and Skills (Interim)