

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER



All School Principals

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Dear Principal

I firstly want to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of all school staff in enabling the return to school of pre-school, P1-P7 and Years 12-14 pupils before the Easter break. As I explained in my letter to you of 16 March, I would have wished to have given a longer period of notice between the Executive making its decision and return of P4-P7 pupils. However, despite the timescales involved, schools have risen to the challenge of welcoming pupils back to school.

It has been clear to me from my visits to schools this week that most pupils are excited to be back amongst their peers and able to enjoy the wide range of benefits that are offered by face to face teaching. While pupils, parents and staff have gone to great lengths to enable continuity of learning to be provided for pupils during the period of school closures, this week I was again reminded first hand of the importance that school-based education plays in the lives of our children and young people.

In my letter to you of 16 March, I explained that school managed breakfast clubs, educational visits, inter-school sports and after school activities will remain paused until advised otherwise. I stated that my department would liaise with the Department of Health to clarify the position before schools return after Easter.

I am conscious that schools now finish for the Easter break. The position remains that school managed breakfast clubs, educational visits, inter-school sports and after school activities are paused until advised otherwise. My department is engaged with colleagues in the Department of Health on these matters and I will inform you as soon as there is any change to this position.

Registered childcare providers operating breakfast clubs and after school care remain open and are unaffected.

As your schools close for the Easter break after what has been another very challenging term, I want to thank you for your work and wish you an enjoyable and restful break.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Weir". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Peter Weir MLA
Minister of Education