



FAQ for Parents

Why is it necessary to decant the children?

Significant upgrade works to the school will be carried out between July 2019 and July 2020. The safety of pupils and staff are paramount and a comprehensive risk assessment was undertaken which is summarised in the points below:

- **Access and egress:** There is only one principal access/egress point to the school and therefore safely segregating pupils, staff and public from plant and vehicle movements, deliveries and other works traffic would be impractical as all would need to share the same access/ egress point.
- **Playground:** The site is fairly small and restricted; again it would be impractical to effectively segregate pupils, staff and the public from plant and machinery movements. Moreover, a substantial proportion of the playground would need to be segregated for the site compound, material stores and refuse materials.
- **Building interior:** The interior of the building is constructed around a central atrium. It would therefore be impractical to safely segregate the extensive construction works planned for the interior of the building, which includes building a passenger lift, from pupils and staff. The noise and dust generated by the construction works would also present such a nuisance as to make the normal activities of a school impractical.
- **Utilities:** During the normal progress of the works there will be times when utilities - water, electricity and gas - will need to be either switched off temporarily or for a prolonged period to allow for essential works to take place safely.

Has the council decanted schools previously when upgrade works were being done?

- East Ayrshire Council has decanted a number of schools in recent years. Whilst every school decant is different, staff have a rigorous process in place which includes mitigating measures to address potential issues and challenges. The focus is rightly on ensuring that there is no impact on learning and teaching and minimising disruption for parents and carers.
- Throughout the decant period, it is even more important that school staff have the correct contact details and are kept fully up-to-date with any medical or other issues of which they should be made aware.

What options were considered for a decant location?

The Council has invested significant time in assessing the advantages and disadvantages of a number of options in order to find the best solution for the children and staff.

- **The former Kilmarnock Academy building:** Centrestage colleagues worked collaboratively with EAC colleagues to try to find a solution. Architectural staff considered the Old Academy building offered the best solution to host a primary school. Unfortunately plans being taken forward by Centrestage meant that this area of the building was not available. One further area of the building was considered - the most recent extension to the building - however, the accommodation there was not considered fit for purpose in quantity, quality or security.
- **Silverwood Primary School:** as a former primary school, the layout and specific accommodation within the building is suitable, however, the poor condition of the building was a key factor in the decision to close it. In the interim period since it was

last occupied there has been further deterioration in both the fabric and structure of the building.

- **Spare accommodation in St Joseph's Academy/Loudoun Academy:** whilst it is not impossible to locate a primary school within a secondary school, there are logistical issues that can impact on all building users. St Joseph's Academy Campus is already managing logistical issues for a primary school and a secondary school and to add another into the building would have been problematic. It would have been more straightforward to manage such logistical issues at Loudoun Academy, however, it was felt that a site closer to the existing school was preferable.
- **Temporary modular accommodation:** significant research was undertaken into both the purchase and leasing of temporary modular buildings. Several sites were considered which required to be adjacent to an existing primary school to allow shared use of dining spaces and gym halls. The most suitable site at Lainshaw PS in Stewarton was considered but it was felt that a site closer to the existing school was preferable. In addition, the substantial costs of buying and leasing options do not present best value for the Council.
- **Kirkstyle Primary School:** as a former primary school, the layout and specific accommodation within the building is suitable. The building has been continuously occupied since the primary school moved to its new location. A programme of updating to the fabric of the building has been undertaken for the groups currently occupying the building on a temporary basis and as such only minimal works will be required for the decant. Plans are already in place to re-locate the groups currently being housed within the building.

Will the school day be affected?

- In order to ensure that the journey to and from Kirkstyle PS does not impact on the number of hours of learning and teaching, the children will be picked up slightly earlier and return to Loanhead PS slightly later (see exact timings noted in the paragraph below).

What are the decant arrangements?

- There will be no impact on the number of hours for learning and teaching.
- Children will be transported by coach from Loanhead PS to a segregated area within the car park of the Ayrshire Athletics Arena (AAA) facility. School staff will accompany the children on the coach journey.
- Coaches will arrive at Loanhead PS at 8.40am and will leave at **8.55am prompt**.
- An escorted '*walking bus*' will take the children from the AAA, across Queen's Drive to the footpath leading directly to Kirkstyle Primary School.
- At the end of the day the '*walking bus*' will take the children from Kirkstyle PS back to the AAA.
- The '*walking bus*' to and from the AAA will take approximately 5 minutes each way and will contribute towards the '*daily mile*' initiative. This means that there will be no impact on actual learning and teaching time.
- Coaches will leave the AAA at **3pm prompt** and return to Loanhead PS at **3.05pm approximately**.

What traffic safety measures have been considered?

- Crossing of Queen's Drive will be via the traffic lights at the entrance to the AAA.
- Updates to the Pelican Crossing will be made. Lights will change as soon as the button is pressed. The length of time for crossing will be extended.
- In addition to staff supervising on coaches, there will be further staff to assist along the route from the AAA to Kirkstyle PS.
- The walking route will be a class 1 gritting route for times when the weather is icy.

Can I take my child to Kirkstyle Primary School?

- Children should not be transported directly to Kirkstyle PS as the roads around the entrance to the school are narrow and busy with residential parking.
- It is expected that all children will travel together from Loanhead PS to the AAA by coach and then walk from there to the school.
- In exceptional circumstances, the Head Teacher may agree to children being transported directly to the **AAA** by parents/carers. However, it is expected that any such agreement and arrangement will remain in place for **the duration** of the decant period.

I am concerned about my child walking from the AAA to Kirkstyle PS

Children will get the opportunity to practise the walking route prior to August 2019. Staff in the school have advised that children regularly walk to events and on outings and are very clear about the rules and expectations.

My child presently gets a taxi to school – how will this be affected?

It is expected that there will be minimal change to transport arrangements. Children will be transported directly to Kirkstyle PS.

My child has an additional support/medical need. How can I be sure he/she will be safe on the journey to and from Kirkstyle PS?

Children will be escorted on the coaches by staff who already know them and their respective needs well. Any medicines, medical information and/or additional information will be carried by staff on the coach journeys.

What happens if my child misses the bus?

If your child misses the coach from Loanhead Primary School in the morning, it will be your responsibility as parent/carer to get your child to Kirkstyle Primary School.

The children will NOT set out on the '*walking bus*' back to the AAA until ALL children are together.

How will my child get home if they are sick during the day?

If your child has to return home during the school day, arrangements will be as present i.e. the school will make the necessary arrangements to get your child home and keep you fully informed.

Has there been any upgrading works carried out in Kirkstyle PS ahead of the decant?

Yes, minor adaptations and upgrading will be undertaken.

Will the teaching materials and classroom resources be transferred from Loanhead PS?

Yes, all teaching resources and furniture will be transferred. Every effort will be taken to ensure that the physical environment will replicate that of Loanhead PS. not impact on the learning and teaching. All teaching staff will continue to be committed to providing the same excellent high standard of education and ensure that every child reaches his/her full potential - the only change will be the location of the learning and teaching.

When will the staff be able to pack up resources?

In circumstances such as this, East Ayrshire Council can apply to the Scottish Government for permission for exceptional school closure to give staff time to pack up resources at Loanhead PS and set up again at Kirkstyle Primary School. It is anticipated that EAC will request exceptional closure on Thursday 27 June and Friday 28 June and Monday 19 August 2019.

If permission is granted, this would mean that the children would finish the current school session at Loanhead Primary School on Wednesday 26 June 2019 and start the 2019/20 school session at Kirkstyle Primary School on Tuesday 20 August 2019.

How will dining arrangements work?

The children will be able to have a cooked lunch or packed lunches as per present arrangements.

What will be the arrangement for the new Primary 1 children?

On Tuesday 20 August, Primary 1 children and an accompanying parent/carer will be picked up (at the finally agreed pick-up point at Loanhead PS) at 9.40am and transported to the AAA. Children and their parents will take the route of the 'walking bus' from there to Kirkstyle Primary School. The coach will wait at the AAA to transport parents/carers back to the pick-up point. At the end of the school day, the Primary 1 children will walk back to the AAA together with the rest of the children. From day 2, arrangements for primary 1 children will be as per the rest of the school.

My child attends PEACE after school care – how will this be affected?

PEACE will be re-located to Kirkstyle Primary School and will continue to offer the same service as at present.

What arrangements will be in place for Parents' Evenings?

Parents' Afternoons/Evenings will be held as normal in Kirkstyle Primary School. This means that parents/carers will be able to view the children's' work and displays.

Will there be an opportunity for parents to visit the new facility to view the class arrangements?

Yes, staff plan to have an open afternoon, early in the new term, once classes are established in their new environment.

Will I still be able to use Parent Pay?

Yes. Arrangements will be set up to ensure Parent Pay can be used as present.

Where can I get more information?

An information session for all parents has been arranged for **25 February 2019 at 7pm** in **Loanhead Primary School**. Council Officers and school staff will be available to answer questions.

Please also check the Council's [news page](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) pages which will be updated with any further information when it is available.

The school will also continue to keep you informed directly.