

10th March 2025

By email:



Update – Penicuik High School Refurbishment and Development

Following recent communications from the school community, the Midlothian Council team progressing the Penicuik High School refurbishment wish to provide an update and some assurance regarding some queries that have been raised with us.

We realise that this type of school build and renovation project requires clarity on steps being taken for the delivery of education during the project build and assurance to staff, parents and young people.

There are plans being developed in partnership with the school to manage the different phases of the project with the overall aim to provide a much improved learning environment for young people attending Penicuik High School.

Contractor Appointment

Morrison's Construction have been appointed as the preferred contractor on this project. We are currently working closely with them to finalise the details of the design. Morrison's are also finalising the physical works to the 1960's building that need to be done in advance of the decant of all pupils for the duration of the construction period.

Morrison's have a lot of experience working on 'live' school sites, where they build a new school next to an existing and active school. They are experienced in minimising disruption to the staff and pupils. They will be working closely with the school and the project team to address concerns and resolve any issues that do arise.

Decant

We do not require modular accommodation because there is a lot of unused space in the school at the moment. We are also undertaking some works to enhance the capacity of the 1960's building so it can take the school's current roll.

The plans for decanting the school into the 1960's building are being developed with the school's Senior Leadership Team. These discussions are continuing as we try to replicate existing facilities where we can.

Parents and pupils have already been advised of the restrictions affecting the delivery of Home Economics. Work is ongoing to ensure that S1-3 Health and Wellbeing entitlements are met through the curriculum during the decant. This includes a new S3 course in Food Health and Wellbeing.

S4-6 students currently following a Practical Cookery curriculum pathway can still study these subjects, utilising Beeslack Community High School's facilities as required. Partnerships with Edinburgh College and local businesses will further augment the Home Economics offer during the decant.

However, all other curriculum areas across the school will remain the same. Timetabling has been tested to ensure this is the case.

Lunch Provision

Due to the loss of the dining hall and kitchen, an alternative solution for meal provision will be required. Options for this are currently being reviewed with Morrisons, the school, and catering managers with examples of what other schools have done in similar situations being drawn on. We will provide a further update on this as we finalise our plans.

Exams

Careful consideration has been given to ensuring young people have access to appropriate spaces to sit assessments and examinations. The senior leadership team will continue to work in partnership with the construction and learning estate development team to plan the spaces required during the examination period.

Accommodation for pupils with Additional Support Needs

We are very mindful of the need to provide suitable accommodation for pupils with additional support needs during the construction process. The team will be in touch in the coming weeks with the proposal for this.

Events

During the build and decant period the senior leadership team will work collaboratively with colleagues in neighbouring schools and council buildings with regard to accommodation required for school events.

WC Provision

The 1960's block will meet statutory requirements for WC ratios. A new accessible WC is being created in the 1960's building to comply with statutory requirements.

Further updates will be provided in the coming weeks and months as we work closely with the school and the contractor to finalise arrangement prior to the decant taking place.

Yours sincerely



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Head of Development