**Emergency Childcare and Free School Meals Breakfast and Packed Lunch**

**Emergency Childcare Request**

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.

2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical

 worker, then childcare provision will be available for them.

3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.

4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for childcare provision. These include:

* Health and social care;
* Education and childcare;
* Key public services;
* Local and national government;
* Food and other necessary goods;
* Public safety and national security;
* Transport;
* Utilities, communication and financial services.

Further details is provided in the following link:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision%29)

Emergency childcare provision is available for these essential frontline workers during the Coronavirus school closure period.  This emergency childcare is for children up to the age of 14 years.

This emergency childcare is available to RCT residents and RCTCBC employees only.

If you are a key frontline worker with a child/children between the ages of 3 to 14 years, please click on the attached link to an e-form <https://forms.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/Web/coronaviruschildcare/startnew>

and complete the required details.

Please note that if you have more than one child, a further form will need to be completed and there is a link at the end of the form to enable a further form to be completed.

During the week commencing 23rd March, the emergency childcare will be offered in your usual school.  Normal school hours will operate and usual school transport for those who normally receive it will be provided. For week commencing Monday 30th March, emergency childcare will be offered in seven emergency centres Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm for key frontline workers. The Council is exploring future transport arrangements for 3 to 14 year olds from 30th March onwards for the emergency childcare between normal school hours. The provision for 3 to 14 year olds is being offered in seven school settings throughout the Rhondda Cynon Taf area.

In addition, it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure that if their child is vulnerable due to an underlying medical or health need that they self-isolate their child.

If you are an essential frontline worker with a child/children aged 0-3 years please email childcareplayemergencyplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk to arrange your support.

**Free School Meals Breakfast and Packed Lunch Request**

Parents/carers of children who are entitled to free school meals will be able to collect a breakfast and packed lunch from their local primary school during the Coronavirus school closure period.

The food will be a cold provision which will be packaged for take away and can be collected between 11am and midday each day.  Each pack will contain a packed lunch for the collection day and breakfast for the following morning.

Please click on the attached link to an e-form <https://forms.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/Web/coronavirusfreeschoolmeals/startnew>

and complete the required details.

**Vulnerable Learners**

If your child is deemed to meet vulnerable learner eligibility and you require emergency childcare please complete the attached link. <https://forms.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/Web/coronaviruschildcare/startnew>

Vulnerable learners include: children with safeguarding and welfare needs, children looked after, young carers and children with children with disabilities. During the week commencing 23rd March, the emergency childcare will be offered in your usual school.  Normal school hours will operate and usual school transport for those who normally receive it will be provided. For week commencing Monday 30th March, emergency childcare will be offered in seven emergency centres.  Provision for vulnerable learners will be for core school hours only. The Council is exploring future transport arrangements for 3 to 14 year olds from 30th March onwards for the emergency childcare between normal school hours. The provision for 3 to 14 year olds is being offered in seven school settings throughout the Rhondda Cynon Taf area.

 Please ensure that if you child is vulnerable and has significant medical and health needs that your child is self-isolated. Please see the attached link for further details. <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults/>