

To: Parent/Carer

Fy nghyf: GD/TM
My Ref:

Eich Cyf: Your Ref:

Dyddiad: 3rd March 2021
Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

As you will be aware the Education Minister confirmed on 5 February 2021 that foundation phase learners should return to school from 22 February. All learners in the foundation phase have now successfully returned to our schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf. As the number of coronavirus cases in our communities has continued to fall new plans have been announced by our Education Minister today. From the 15 March primary, secondary, all-through schools, special schools and PRUs will provide onsite education provision for:

- All primary aged learners
- Vulnerable learners
- Critical worker's children
- Learners undertaking essential exams or assessments
- Learners in Years 11 and 13.

Flexibility will also be offered to secondary schools, all-through schools and PRUs to provide access to the onsite education provision for other learners, including those in Years 10 and 12, who may also have been entered for qualifications this summer. In addition to this, arrangements will also be made to enable learners from Years 7, 8 and 9 to attend schools for face-to-face check-ins prior to the Easter break where at all possible. The opportunity to check-in will be focused on support for wellbeing and readiness for return to school after Easter.

It is anticipated that there will be a full return of learners to school following the Easter break and these plans will be informed by the most current medical advice available, at this time.

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Dewiswch iaith a diwyg eich dogfen | Available in alternative formats and languages

Croesawn ohebu yn Gymraeg a fydd gohebu yn y Gymraeg ddim yn arwain at oedi. Rhowch wybod inni beth yw'ch dewis iaith e.e Cymraeg neu'n ddwyieithog.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or bilingual.

Schools will have a degree of flexibility to develop a plan for the phased return of learners back into schools, and they will be in contact with you shortly to confirm arrangements for your child's setting. Their plans will be guided by the school facilities, the sizes of year groups and their detailed risk assessments. However, the following arrangements will apply to all schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf:

- All **foundation phase learners** will continue to attend school throughout the phased introduction of new year groups back in to school.
- Arrangements for the phased return of learners in **key stage 2, and Years 11 and 13** will commence on the 15 March 2021.
- Learners in **Years 7, 8 and 9** will have accessed at least one check-in on school premises prior to the Easter break, where at all possible
- **Vulnerable learners** and the **children of critical workers** will continue to access face to face education in school until their year group has returned to school.
- Remote learning will continue to be provided for **self-isolating learners** and those **year groups not accessing face to face learning** in school.

At secondary level, significant focus will be placed on ensuring appropriate assessment of learners in Years 11 and 13 for qualification purposes. Remote learning will continue for those learners and year groups not engaged in face to face learning, with an acknowledgment that this poses specific challenges as face to face learning in school increases. Remote learning will also continue for self-isolating learners that are unable to attend school due to shielding, close contact with a confirmed case or a Covid diagnosis.

From the 15 March 2021, the number of places for **Breakfast Club** will continue to be limited to ensure that social distancing and effective hygiene and preventative measures can be maintained. Therefore, the parents/children that have previously successfully applied and secured a placement for breakfast club in December 2020 will be able to access this provision. A new application process will commence on 12 March 2021 for summer term breakfast club provision from (12 April 2021–20 July 2021). Further information will follow in due course.

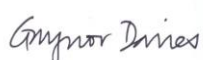
All Covid risk assessments will be updated by our school leaders to reflect current Welsh Government and local authority guidance on the phased return of learners to school. All staff have the option of participating in twice weekly lateral flow tests to keep everyone in the school community safe. There will be an opportunity for young people in Year 10 and above to also undertake twice weekly lateral flow testing in the home context. Further information and detailed guidance on this will follow as soon as this is made available by Welsh Government.

Staggered start and finish times will be maximised and schools will continue to have robust plans and a range of measures in place to mitigate any identified risks in a school setting. All secondary school aged learners will continue to require a face covering for use in school where social distancing cannot be maintained (including within the classroom).

I am sure that you are all delighted that your children are returning to school after many months of significant restrictions. These restrictions remain of course, and your continued support in adhering to these in our communities is hugely appreciated.

Many thanks for continuing to support you child with their learning.

With best wishes.



Gaynor Davies
Director of Education and Inclusion Services