

Dear Parent/Carer,

I would like to extend a very warm welcome back to all of our pupils and families returning to school after a particularly challenging time for us all.

As promised, I am writing to update you on the most recent advice regarding your child's return to school.

As you are no doubt aware headteachers and their staff have worked tirelessly with Caerphilly County Borough Council to ensure that school environments are compliant with all the latest Welsh Government guidance to make sure your children had a successful and positive return to school after such a long break.

As of Monday 14th September, all pupils, who can are expected to attend school.

This latest Welsh Government advice can be viewed on their website here <https://gov.wales/education-coronavirus>

We all need to follow Welsh Government guidelines and be cautious given the recent developments and lockdown in Caerphilly County Borough. We ask for all parents and pupils support particularly regarding following social distancing guidance in school yards, outside of school gates and at bus stops.. Schools have staggered start and finish times to try and alleviate some of the gatherings inside and outside of school sites and to ensure the safety of pupils. This will be reviewed by Headteachers on a regular basis, so no congregating please.

COVID-19 procedures and Contact Tracing

As you are aware, Caerphilly Borough has been placed in lockdown by the Welsh Government.

All schools have carried out risk assessments and have robust procedures in place to help them manage potential positive cases of coronavirus to ensure they remain safe environments for teaching and learning.

If your child develops symptoms at school the Headteachers have been advised to contact you to take them home, self-isolate and to book a test asap.

Please understand Headteachers must be cautious as per Welsh Government guidance. If your child has symptoms, please do not send your child to school.

Where a positive case(s) has been confirmed the head-teacher will establish and identify all close contacts and parents will be advised if their child needs to self-isolate.

Whilst your child is self-isolating school will provide work and free school meals pupils will receive a meal.

If your child tested positive, you will be contacted by the Gwent Contact Tracing Service so they can establish who and where you have been in close contact with and parents will be advised if their child needs to self-isolate.

Please be patient with the team as contact could take place out of hours.

Whilst there is no requirement for the household to self-isolate, they must if social distancing from the positive case is not possible.

More information about contact tracing and the test, trace, protect procedures can be found on the council's website

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Coronavirus/How-to-apply-for-a-Covid-19-test-if-you-have-any-s>

If your child develops symptoms during self-isolation, please book a test.

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Coronavirus/How-to-apply-for-a-Covid-19-test-if-you-have-any-s>

If the result is positive you continue to self-isolate along with you family for the advised time.

If the result is negative self-isolation should continue to the advised date as the virus could be incubating.

If your child develops symptoms at school the Headteachers have been advised to contact you to take them home, self-isolate and to book a test asap.

If there is a positive case on school transport the process is the same and taxi/minibus/bus drivers, chaperone and classroom bubble pupils will be contacted and told to self-isolate.

We all need to work together to manage this very difficult situation.

If your child is ill for any other reason, please ask for and follow medical advice.

Face Coverings

You will no doubt be aware that Welsh Government issued updated advice earlier this week about the use of face coverings in school settings which can be found on their website: -

- Technical Advisory Group – Face coverings - <https://gov.wales/technical-advisory-group-face-coverings-children-and-young-people-education-settings>

Caerphilly County Borough Council have provided every secondary school pupil and all members of staff with five reusable and adjustable face coverings along with a sealable plastic bag for storage

We are strongly recommending that all secondary school pupils and all staff wear face coverings where social distancing of 2m cannot be maintained and if there is a genuine reason for not doing so.

Please support us to implement the wearing of masks and remind your children that some pupils cannot wear masks due to medical or other personal reasons.

Face coverings are not required to be worn in Primary Schools.

School Transport

We are **strongly recommending** that masks are used by all secondary school pupils using school transport.

We also ask for your help in encouraging children to think of others and act responsibly when travelling from home to school.

Further information and frequently asked questions about school transport arrangements can be found on the CCBC website

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/Services/Schools-and-learning/School-transport/School-transport-FAQs>

Breakfast Clubs

We completely appreciate that not having access to your usual breakfast club is difficult and inconvenient for you.

If breakfast clubs were provided at this time it would mean more potential disruption for schools. We are currently carrying out further risk assessments to identify when clubs may restart.

This is still a very uncertain time for all of us, however schools and the local authority are committed to working together to ensure that children and staff are safe and well in school and can confidently continue with their learning.

We will continue to keep in touch with any updates to our plans or changes due to new or updated Welsh Government advice.

It is crucial that we all play our part in social distancing, reporting symptoms, adhering to advice on self-isolation and protecting others.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for your support, patience and understanding during these unprecedented times.

Regards

Keri Cole

Chief Education Officer

Caerphilly County Borough Council