

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope you and your family are well during these challenging times.

As promised, I am writing to update you regarding the new school term in September 2020. I will write again, just before the first day of term.

As you are no doubt aware our schools worked very hard to welcome pupils back on 29<sup>th</sup> June, in order to “check in, catch up and prepare” for the return to school in September 2020.

The feedback from the 3 week “check in, catch up and prepare” period was positive in many ways and really helped to build the confidence of school staff, children and of course you as parents and carers.

Last week, schools received Welsh Government guidance for the new term. There are more updates due next month and headteachers need these before they can further update you on the arrangements for September 2020.

Some schools have already planned school times, whilst others are still in the process of working this through, as they wait for the necessary updates from the Welsh Government. We would ask you to be patient whilst they finalise their plans for September.

I assure you that you will all have the information you need in time for your child to return to school.

You will, of course, be receiving information from your child’s own school, but I hope you find it helpful to have a general update as to what you can expect from us and what we ask from our parents and carers,

### **What do we know about September 2020?**

- Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> and Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> have been set apart as planning and preparation days for schools to update risk assessments and make the necessary practical changes within the building.
- From Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> September until Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> September, there will be a planned phased return so that all pupils can be in school full-time from Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

It is expected that all pupils will return but schools understand the anxieties that some of you have and will work with you to reassure and support your child to return.

The Education Welfare Service hotline will operate over the summer holidays. If you or your children are concerned about anything and need advice, guidance or support please call 07702948725 and one of the team will be able to help.

Catering arrangements will be exactly the same in September as they have been for the last 3 weeks, (i.e. all children to bring their own packed lunches, no hot food will be available). We are exploring a number of options at the moment, once the arrangements have been agreed we will let you know.

Free school meals will continue to be provided until the end of September 2020.

Schools will still have to adapt start and finish times for pupils, and we know this is inconvenient for you. However, safety is paramount, and schools need to continue to do this in order to minimise contact between groups of pupils.

It is still vitally important that your children stay at home if they have any COVID-19 symptoms. If they present any symptoms at school, they will be sent home.

Childcare arrangements for key workers will not be provided during the phasing in period (3<sup>rd</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> September 2020). Please contact our Family Information Service, [fis@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:fis@caerphilly.gov.uk) and they will be able to advise you of your childcare options, if you require them.

### **What updates are we waiting for?**

- School transport - those of you who rely upon school or public transport need to know how your children can access buses and taxis and we are awaiting this precise advice from Welsh Government. We will provide an update as soon as possible.
- Face coverings - There has been a lot of information in the media and some of it can be confusing for all of us. Current advice is that pupils and staff do not need to wear face masks. If this changes, e.g. for school buses, we will let you know.

We are extremely grateful for all the support we have received so far from the school community. We will continue to keep in touch if there are any updates to our plans or if we need to make changes due to new or updated government advice.

The last few months have been so incredibly hard for so many. I hope that you are all able to take some time out this summer to enjoy the weather and the opportunity to spend time together as families

Regards

Keri Cole

Chief Education Officer

Caerphilly County Borough Council