

Date/Dyddiad: 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Parent/ Carer

## **PHASED RETURN TO SCHOOL - CHILDREN IN NURSERY, RECEPTION AND YEARS 1 AND 2**

As you will be aware the Minister for Education announced that schools will be reopening to children in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 2 after half term. Welsh Government issued updated operational guidance for schools earlier this week, which we have been reviewing and discussing with head teachers.

As we all know, we are very much still in the middle of the Coronavirus pandemic and this guidance has been provided to inform schools' individual planning for a safe return for pupils and staff. Every school in Torfaen is now reviewing their planning in light of the guidance and preparing for the new measures that will be in place prior to schools reopening. These include regular testing of school staff and the requirement for all staff to wear face masks in school, including in classrooms.

Wearing a mask is now a requirement for primary school staff in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained. There is no requirement for the younger children to wear face coverings in school at this time.

While we want to get schools back in operation quickly after half term, we will be using the flexibility Welsh Government have allowed to take the time we need to make sure the reopening of your child's school is safe and goes as smoothly as possible.

**All schools in Torfaen will be open to all learners in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 2 no later than Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February although some schools may be able to open earlier that week.**

**Children of critical workers and vulnerable children who have been attending will continue with face to face learning in school.**

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### **THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN LARGER PRINT AND BRAILLE UPON REQUEST**

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English.

Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and will not lead to delay.

*Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.*

*Cewch ateb Cymraeg i bob gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd yn arwain at oedi.*

Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 6YB Tel 01495 762200  
Y Ganolfan Ddinesig, Pont-y-pŵl, Torfaen, NP4 6YB Ffôn 01495 762200

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As more pupils will return to classrooms, every school is reviewing their support for on-line learning for pupils in Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 as many more staff will now be in school supporting face to face learning. This will mean some changes are likely to the blended learning offer – your school will update you on this.

Each school will be contacting their parents and carers shortly to tell them about:

- the date for their child's return – this may vary for different year groups or between schools
- what time their child should come to school and be picked up
- some schools may also need to vary their hours over the coming weeks to allow time for additional cleaning of teaching spaces and to ensure staff have the time they need for on-going planning and preparation. If this is the case your school will provide online support for learning during these times
- for parents of nursery children including "rising 3s", you will have information on the arrangements that will be in place to support your child's sessions in school which may include a change in session length – your school will advise.

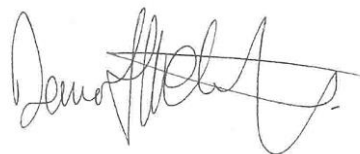
During this partial return to school it is vital that all parents and carers remember that they can help schools and our whole community by continuing to follow public health guidance. We ask that only one adult comes to drop off and collect children from school and that they maintain social distancing during these times and take their children home directly. We also ask all parents and carers to wear a face covering when dropping off and collecting children. It is important for us all to remember that while schools are partially reopening, this does not signal a relaxation of the current lockdown rules.

We are not in a position to advise you at this stage of when we may see older primary and secondary age pupils return but once we have this information we will be in touch with you promptly.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor Richard Clark**  
**EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR EDUCATION**



**Dermot McChrystal**  
**CHIEF OFFICER, EDUCATION AND LEAD**  
**DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG**  
**PEOPLE**

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