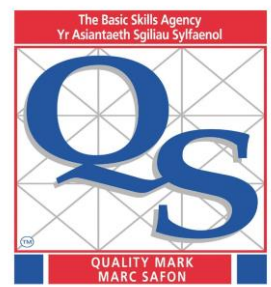


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18th December 2020

Dear Parent / Guardian,

When I wrote to you on Wednesday, I promised to keep you updated with any developments from the Welsh Government over the Christmas break. At that time I had no idea that an announcement would be made so soon. As I am sure you are aware, late yesterday afternoon the Welsh Government announced arrangements for the return to school in January 2021. Once again, I heard the announcement at the same time as you.

Following the announcement from Welsh Government, the Local Authority circulated the following approach which will be taken by schools in Caerphilly. This decision has been based upon the increasing number of staff shortages due to positive cases and self-isolation together with the concern that these numbers are, of course, unpredictable for the first week of term. All risk assessments will have to be reviewed. In line with this, Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th January will be distance learning days whilst we establish the number of staff we have available. Following these distance learning days, face to face provision will be available for eligible key worker childcare and vulnerable pupils, and schools will contact other groups/classes of pupils to begin their learning on site.

I very much hope that we will not be affected by Covid after the Christmas break and that we will be able to return to face to face learning quickly. However, the Welsh Government has said that all pupils must return to face to face learning by Monday 18th January 2021. Should we have the capacity then school will be open as normal for face to face learning from Wednesday 6th January. You will be contacted on Monday 4th January with an update regarding the situation. I appreciate that this is very short notice but the situation is completely out of my hands and I will continue to do all in my power to manage the situation in the best way possible for our school.

The Local Authority is currently reviewing eligibility of previous childcare applications so that parents/carers can be informed of the outcome next week. If you fall into one of the categories below you should contact the educationwelfare@caerphilly.gov.uk mailbox to apply if:

- your circumstances have changed since March, 2020, e.g. school, occupation, etc., or
- it is a new application
- The Welsh Government list of key workers is extensive, so priority for applications will be given to those from frontline emergency services, social care and education staff in the first instance, in line with our current context in Caerphilly County Borough.

For those pupils entitled to free school meals, deliveries will continue as they do at the current time. All pupils attending school from Wednesday 6th January will require a packed lunch as there will be no catering facility on site.

When we return to school in January the same rules regarding Covid-19 will remain. If anyone has any symptoms of Coronavirus then they should not attend the school setting. This includes all staff and pupils. The contact groups will remain as they were prior to the Christmas break and pupils may continue to wear their PE kit to school on the relevant day.

I very much hope that this will be my final letter to you all before January. However, as you will be aware, the situation with Covid-19 continues to develop and the case numbers in Wales are rising at a significant rate. I will keep you updated should any new developments arise although you will probably hear them first in the media. Please continue to follow our Twitter page (@rhiwsyrdafydd) as this is a quick and easy way of getting messages out.

Mr C George

Headteacher
Rhiw Syr Dafydd Primary School