

Please ask for:

Direct Line:

E-Mail:

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Date:

16 July 2020

Dear Staff/Parents/Carers

At the end of each academic year, I always write to our schools to look back at the school year and to celebrate our successes. In that sense, this year is no different with our schools continuing to do brilliantly in supporting all our learners as they strive to reach their potential. Given this year's pandemic, I thought it only right that I extend the scope of my communication to include learners and their families too.

In my letter on 9 July, I was able to confirm that the Welsh Government had announced a return to school for compulsory education for all our learners by 14 September 2020. Since that announcement, we have been working closely with our schools to plan for this in a safe and organised way.

As was the case when schools opened for the check-in and catch-up sessions there will be different approaches across our schools based on a lot of different factors. Each school is carrying out further risk assessments to help them identify the approach that is right for your child's school. However, we have agreed further key principles with our headteachers to ensure that wherever possible there is consistency.

All pupils will return in a phased way to school/PRU in the two-week period at the beginning of the autumn term in September (after any preparation days). All pupils (with the possible exception of nursery) will be full-time by Monday, 14 September.

We would like to highlight the following key points:

- From September, school sessions, where possible, will be provided within the normal operational hours of that school.
- Where possible, and based on each individual school's risk assessment, breakfast clubs and after-school clubs can restart.
- School meals will restart on 14 September. Until that time all pupils will need to bring a packed lunch for the first two weeks of term. The BACS payments and weekly food parcels will continue for this period.

- Additional cleaning hours will allow more frequent cleaning of high frequency contact points in each school.
- Where possible, parents and carers should continue to travel with their children to and from school. The council's Transport Team is working with schools to determine the demand for home to school transport for eligible pupils and will endeavour to meet these requirements. The wearing of face masks is likely to be compulsory but further information will be communicated via your school and the Council's various platforms over the summer.
- All children will be encouraged to wash their hands regularly with soap and water throughout the day/session. Hand sanitizer will also be available.
- As well as a thorough daily clean, a "clean as you go" process will continue to be deployed in all schools to minimise the risk of cross contamination and transmission of Covid-19.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the work of our headteachers, school staff and the wider school community has made me immensely proud. From providing childcare to our key workers and our most vulnerable to ensuring that all our learners have food on the table our staff have been willing to go the extra mile. Whilst at the same time ensuring that our learners have continued to learn from home and their own nearest and dearest have been taken care of. As Director of Education, I will be eternally grateful for all you have done.

For our learners, this will have been a period in time that will define their generation. I would like to thank our learners for how they have approached this strange time in their learning and make a promise to them that the whole Education system in Swansea is on their side as we continue to ensure that every child and young person has the best possible opportunities in life.

Finally, I would like to thank you as parents and carers. The messages of support and challenge have been numerous and I can assure you that they have all played a part in how we as a council have adapted our approaches throughout this time. We will continue to work with our schools to ensure that you and your children get the support that you need when we return to school in September.

Families who need to access childcare during the 6-week summer holiday period should do so from existing registered private childcare providers available in Swansea. Please contact the Swansea Family Information Service 01792 517222/ fis@swansea.gov.uk for further details.

Please be reassured your child's school will be providing you with a lot more detail between now and the beginning of term. Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

N. S. Williams

Nick Williams
Director of Education