

Please ask for:

Direct Line:

E-Mail:

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

Date: 27 August 2020

Dear Parent/Carer

Planning the safe reopening of schools from next week onwards has progressed well during the summer break and I am delighted that Swansea schools will open the doors to a fresh start, putting safety first.

When I wrote to you in July, I promised to update you on arrangements at the start of the new academic year.

We have developed and updated our risk assessments and plans for how schools will operate to include school transport, visitors, staff and pupil risk assessments as well. Our schools have received support to help plan their classrooms and corridors and will continue to receive advice from our officers on how to control the learning environment so that your child is safe during this challenging time.

All children and young people will be encouraged to wash their hands regularly with soap and water throughout the day/session. Hand sanitisers will also be available across each school.

The Test, Trace and Protect guidance, school transport and school trip guidance have also been updated. It is very important that you are familiar with the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) guidance. Swansea Council will issue up to date guidance via social media on TTP in the next few days and each school's operational plan will contain a section on TTP.

Additional cleaning hours will allow more frequent cleaning of high frequency contact points in each school. In addition to the thorough daily clean, a "clean as you go" process will continue to be used in all schools.

Your school will be able to tell you more about how they will operate but we know that all schools will be contacting parents and carers directly to let them know the days their children should attend up until then, along with specific arrangements for their school.

Where possible, school sessions will be provided within the normal operational hours of each 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 take a packed lunch for the days that they attend during the first two weeks of term. The choice of BACS payment or a weekly food parcel will continue for those eligible for free school meals until canteens reopen.

Attendance at school will be compulsory from 14 September but schools and Swansea Council will work with parents and carers to try to resolve any issues and provide reassurance where necessary. Parents are asked to contact their school if a pupil is unable to attend for any legitimate reason. Pupils with medical needs may feel less confident about returning to school. Help, support and adjustment can be provided if you talk to your school.

If your child is in secondary school, they may be required to wear face masks in school corridors and communal areas. School transport drivers and passenger assistants will be wearing face coverings and personal protective equipment where necessary. There will not be social distancing between pupils on board dedicated school transport vehicles but pupils aged over 11 years will be required to wear face coverings unless they have an exemption from doing so. In line with Welsh Government guidance, food or drink must not be consumed on board school transport services. Guidance for pupils and parents on school transport will be available to you via your school.

Pupils travelling on public transport will be required to wear 3 layer face coverings if they are aged 11 or over as they will be mixing with the wider travelling public. Social distancing is also required on public transport services.

If you have questions or concerns, please talk to your school and we will help schools resolve issues as best we can. A lot of advice changes and it is not always the same in Wales as the rest of the United Kingdom but we are working closely with Welsh Government and Public Health Wales to make sure that we are following the up to date advice.

Swansea schools will receive funding for additional staff to help with accelerated learning for certain year groups. If you feel that your child would benefit from extra support, you should discuss your concerns with the school.

The start of the new academic year will be very different this year and we all have the same aim of a fresh start with safety first. I sincerely hope that the return to education from next week onwards is a positive experience for the children and young people here in Swansea.

Regards



Nick Williams
Director of Education