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Our Ref./Ein Cyf. LP/CG

Your Ref./Eich Cyf.

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Lynn Phillips

Date:/ Dyddiad: 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020



Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol

**Blaenau Gwent**

County Borough Council

Dear Parent/Carer,

## Re. Blaenau Gwent Education Arrangements for January 2021

The Welsh Government, following discussions with the Welsh Local Government Association, has now approved a nationwide approach to schools re-opening in January 2021. This includes flexibility for phased start dates, remote learning and provision for the children of critical workers and the most vulnerable pupils. It expects for all schools to be back to full face-to-face teaching by Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> January.

Minimising disruption to the learning of children and young people remains a priority for the Council, balanced with the health & well-being of learners and the whole school community. Since the announcement we have worked closely with our Headteachers and Governing Bodies in Blaenau Gwent to agree the following common approach:

- **All schools will have either planning/INSET days on both Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021. This is to ensure that staff can prepare fully for a safe return for learners. No pupils will attend school on these days;**
- **Remote Learning will be provided for all pupils on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021;**
- **From Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021, childcare provision will be available for the children of critical workers only; and for identified vulnerable pupils, including pupils with a Statement of Educational Need. Eligible parents (including those with children with a Statement of SEN will be asked to apply to the Council for this provision. For more information about eligibility and to apply visit the Council's Schools & Coronavirus page – <https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/resident/latest-covid-19-information/coronavirus-covid-19-latest-education-information/>;**
- **If your child attends Pen-y-Cwm Special School or the River Centre 3 – 16 Learning Community, you do not need to complete the application process;**



The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English and we will communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.  
Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn cyfathrebu gyda chi yn eich dewis iaith, dim ond i chi rhoi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.



- **Secondary schools are looking to establish provision for Year 11 learners (as a priority group) from the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021; and,**
- **Schools are expecting to welcome back all learners from 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021.**



This is the approach that we have currently agreed with all schools across the County Borough. Any change to this approach will be communicated accordingly.

Childcare provision will be provided for the children of critical workers only, and where both parents are classed as critical workers, or a single parent is classed as a critical worker. We would urge you to apply for this provision only where no other childcare options are available to you.

In the first instance, we anticipate that this provision will be in your child's normal school, although this is subject to change due to staff resources. More information on eligibility is available on the Council website (*as above*). Applications will close at 2pm on Monday, 21st December 2020.

I can confirm that direct payments for families eligible for Free School Meals will continue until the week ending 8<sup>th</sup> January.

Your school will be in contact with you about the start of term learning arrangements for your child/children, including any information on remote learning. Parents of identified vulnerable pupils will be contacted with any specific arrangements.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind parents that your child/children should not return to school in January if they are:

- **A confirmed case of COVID-19**
- **Experiencing symptoms of COVID-19**
- **Living with a confirmed case of COVID-19**
- **Identified as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19**
- **Living with someone with symptoms of COVID-19 and who is awaiting a test result**

This is extremely important as we try to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 in our communities.

You may also have seen recently that the Welsh Government has announced that it is to introduce testing into schools in the New Year. We are awaiting further guidance on this and will be working closely with all our schools and colleagues in Environmental Health and Health & Safety on the arrangements when we have more information. We will update you further on this when we are able.

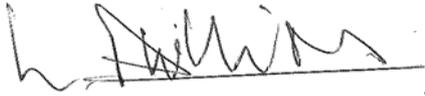
We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh or English. / Croesawn ohebiaith trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

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*(le gwell i fyw a gweithio)*

Once again, thank you all for your continued support for our schools and education colleagues during these difficult times.

I wish you all a safe and happy festive season.

Best Wishes



**Lynn Phillips**  
**Corporate Director for Education**  
**Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**



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