



**“Working, Praying, Sharing and Learning Together”**  
**“Gweithio, Gweddio, Rhannu a Dysgu gyda'n gilydd”**

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Dear Parents,

Today, Wales' Education Minister; Kirsty Williams announced that following the period of lockdown schools will open for almost all children on June 29<sup>th</sup>. The remainder of the term will be extended by one week and schools will close for the Summer on July 27<sup>th</sup>. Schools will then re-open in September and the October half-term break will be extended from one week to two weeks.

The Minister has also indicated that schools will not operate as they have done before the lockdown. She explained that because of social distancing guidelines, in order to make schools 'as safe as possible' that around 30% of pupils will attend at any one time. She was clear that for as long as social distancing is necessary; that schools will operate using blended learning approach. Blended learning means that short periods of face to face learning at school will be supported by distance learning which happens at home.

At school we have been preparing our classrooms [including the nursery] and other areas around the school so that we can observe social distancing guidance. We have been planning how we will allow children to work and play as safely as possible. Following the Minister's announcement we are now in a position to make a start on developing timetables and organising groups/ cohorts of children. We are looking forward to re-opening but there is still a lot of work to be done and many operational details to be finalised in order to be ready for June 29<sup>th</sup>.

All schools in Blaenau Gwent are working closely with the Local Authority and Welsh Government to ensure that we are ready to operate in the safest possible way. More details will follow as we work towards the re-opening date and you will be regularly updated as further details emerge over the coming weeks.

Whilst every effort will be made to make school as safe as possible what is very clear is that the Minister has left the decision of whether or not to send your children to school in your hands. Your decision at this time will be respected and there will be no penalty for you choosing not to send your children into school. The decisions you make should reflect your children's and your family's health circumstances. In the next round of phone-calls from school you will be asked whether you would like your children to attend school at this point.

Very Best Wishes,

Tim Baxter

