

Eich cyf / Your ref:
Fy nghyf / My ref:
Dyddiad / Date: 30-04-20

Gofynner am / Please ask for: Gareth Morgans
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Dear Parent,

First of all, I would like to thank you for all your support over the last few weeks since our schools closed due to Covid-19. I'm extremely proud of all the staff who work in our Education and Children's Services as they've dealt with this crisis in a professional way and have shown a 'can do' attitude. I'm also proud of our amazing children and young people who have responded well to this unprecedented change and are still engaging enthusiastically in their learning. On a daily basis, I see amazing examples of their innovative work on social media and receive reports that our staff and pupils are involved in fantastic projects.

I can assure you we are doing all we can to support our staff to keep in touch with our learners. This will have been an extremely unsettling period for you and your children, especially those due to sit exams, those leaving school or moving to a new school later this year. Please be assured that we will continue to do everything we can to support our pupils.

I would also like to thank you for respecting Welsh Government's advice in regard to keeping your child at home. Keeping children safely at home should limit the chance of the virus spreading and protect those vulnerable to more serious illness as a result of the virus. However, I accept that some of you may be 'key workers' and need childcare. I'd like to thank you for all you've done over the last few weeks and hope that our Childcare Hubs, which have been providing essential childcare since schools closed, have enabled you to get on with the crucial roles you play.

Research shows that there are **five possible losses** during events such as this and by working together I believe we can address these issues. I include some possible actions below:

Possible Loss	What can you do?
Children and young people miss their daily routine ; getting up, going to school, seeing friends etc. as it helps them make sense of life and develops lifelong habits.	Try and set a simple routine at home ; getting up at the same time, eating breakfast together, going out for exercise together, time for a family chat etc.
Children and young people miss the school day structure ; registration, lessons, break time, dinner time etc. which gives order to their day.	Try and set a simple structure to your home learning . Remember, you're not replicating school however you can work out a simple timetable to do the work the school has set; Activity 1, break, Activity 2, Family exercise, Activity 3, family game time etc
Children and young people miss seeing their friends and peers; making and sustaining friendships is a major part of growing up.	Try and make sure that your child has opportunities to catch up with friends , speak with them and share what they've been doing.
Children and young people miss the opportunities they get in school, and in after school activities.	There are many opportunities at home ; try and help your child to try new hobbies or access fun online activities e.g. art, cooking, gardening.
Children and young people will miss their freedom ; they are at home most of the time and with their parents/carers/family all the time.	Try and make sure that your child has some freedom to choose their own activity . It could be time on their own, playing a game, reading etc; we all need some 'me time'.

Gareth Morgans, BAdd/BEd; MGw/MSc

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Mae croeso i chi gysylltu â mi yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg
You are welcome to contact me in Welsh or English

In addition, we must focus on your wellbeing and your child's wellbeing at this time- your home is not a school and you're not expected to spend all day learning. Support as much as you can and provide the space for your child to learn; working and learning at home is new to all of us and we can only do the best we can. However, you must remember children learn all the time and you were their first teachers.

What should I expect from my school?

The resilience shown by your child's school over the last few weeks has been truly remarkable and I'm sure you share my heartfelt gratitude for how they have responded. We have asked all schools to maintain regular contact with pupils to ensure their safety and wellbeing during this time. Schools will choose to keep contact in a variety of different ways, the approach will vary in response to individual needs. When the school contacts you, please share any concerns you might have and I'm confident our staff will work to support you and find a way to address your concerns.

We are working on innovative ways to make sure that children can continue to access learning over the coming weeks. Here is a link to the [Carmarthenshire Distance Learning Plan](#). Your child's school will be using existing technology to set work and activities. Alternatively, they may send you physical packs of work and activities. Schools that can set online work for pupils will be updating their learning platforms with activities and responding to completed work. There are a couple of things to be mindful of:

- Without a teacher present at home, we will ensure that activities do not require high levels of support and input.
- School staff will keep to key policies around the safe use of the internet for pupils and staff;
- Schools will be mindful of the pressures on families in the current circumstances and that children will sometimes need to share devices. With that in mind, it is not wise to try to 'recreate' a typical school day and you may need some flexibility in terms of the times that your children can access online learning tools.

It is unclear as yet when schools will re-open for our children and young people however it will only be when it is safe to do so and based on **5 guiding principles** as set out by the Education Minister, Kirsty Williams on the 28th April:

1. **The safety and mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of students and staff**
2. **Continuing contribution to the national effort and strategy to fight the spread of COVID-19**
3. **Having the confidence of parents, staff and students – based on evidence and information – so that they can plan ahead**
4. **Ability to prioritise learners at key points, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds**
5. **Consistency with the Welsh Government's framework for decision making, to have guidance in place to support measures such as distancing, managing attendance and wider protective actions.**

To close, I would like to thank you again for your support and for working with us as we fight this invisible threat. For further and regular updates please visit Carmarthenshire County Council's COVID-19 web pages- newsroom.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/coronavirus

Yours sincerely,



COVID-19 Guidance to parents and carers to support families to stay safe, healthy and learning:
<https://gov.wales/covid-19-guidance-parents-and-carers-support-families-stay-safe-healthy-and-learning>

If you have any questions or suggestions on how we can help you please contact your school or the Department:
cpd@carmarthenshire.gov.uk