

Dear Parent/Carer,

21-09-20

I would like to take this opportunity to write to you all to thank you for everything you have done to support your child's learning since March and, more recently, since our schools re-opened in September.

I would also like to provide an update in respect of a range of issues that are currently affecting schools, you as parents/carers and our learners. I am sorry that this is a long letter, but I thought it would be helpful to provide you with a comprehensive update at this time. This note covers the following issues:

- Use of face coverings by learners using home-to-school transport
- Use of face coverings by learners in secondary schools
- School attendance if your child is showing symptoms
- Self-isolation
- School 'bubble' arrangements
- Social distancing
- Pupil behaviour
- Parking outside/on school premises

Use of face coverings by learners using home-to-school transport

I would be grateful if you could ensure that learners aged 11 and over, using local authority provided school transport, wear suitable face coverings. This requirement does not apply to some learners with additional learning needs or relevant medical conditions which constitute an exemption.

We have provided each secondary aged learner with a suitable face covering and we are asking parents to ensure they have it on (or their own face covering) when they get on school transport, and that they have washed or sanitised their hands.

A pupil who is not exempt from wearing a face covering, but who refuses to wear one, or removes the covering while on board school transport, may be refused onward travel and have their entitlement to free transport removed. Therefore, please make every effort to ensure your child adheres to this requirement.

Use of face coverings by learners in secondary schools

Secondary school learners are asked to wear a suitable face covering in communal areas in school including corridors, halls and toilets. This requirement does not apply to learners with additional learning needs, relevant medical conditions which constitute an exemption, or to learners with disabilities. This requirement does not apply to primary school-age learners. Individual schools are responsible for identifying these communal areas and parents/carers are therefore advised to ensure that their child is following the requirements in place in each school.

School attendance if your child is showing symptoms

If your child is unwell at home with any of the symptoms of COVID-19 listed below, please do not send them to school. The main symptoms of COVID-19 are:

- **a high temperature- chest or back feels hot to the touch.**
- **a new, continuous cough- this means coughing a lot, for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours; and/or**

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- a loss or change to sense of smell or taste- this means they cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal.

If your child has any of the main symptoms of coronavirus:

- get a test to check if they have coronavirus as soon as possible; and
- stay at home and do not have visitors until you get the test result.

Please inform your child's school **immediately** or if out-of-hours please call Llesiant Delta Wellbeing on **0300 333 2222** or by emailing TTP@deltawellbeing.org.uk who will notify the school on your behalf.

Please be sure to follow the Welsh Government's **Self-isolation stay at home guidance**.

If, however, your child does not have symptoms of COVID-19 but has other cold-like symptoms, such as a runny nose, they do not need to be tested and they and you do not need to self-isolate.

Your child should attend school if fit and healthy to do so.

Self-isolation

If your child is asked to self-isolate by their school, this is following an assessment approved by the Test Trace Protect Team (TTP) and Public Health Wales and therefore needs to be strictly adhered to. **Self-isolation means that the person required to self-isolate does not leave home and no visitors attend the premises.** I must remind you that sanctions can be imposed on any individual found not to be adhering to self-isolation rules by enforcement agencies.

If your child is identified as a contact of a positive case of COVID-19 (either another pupil or staff member), you will be contacted immediately by the school to arrange for the collection of your child. It is therefore recommended that you make the necessary arrangements in advance in case of this eventuality. Even if your child is eligible for free home-to-school transport, guidance from Welsh Government is that this should not be used in such a situation. Only in exceptional circumstances will the local authority be able to transport learners home from school if they are required to self-isolate.

School 'bubble' arrangements and self-isolation directives

Schools are working hard to reduce the chances of COVID-19 spreading. In order to restrict the number of contacts, learners are being kept with their own year groups and/or classes to form a 'bubble' which will be kept apart from other 'bubbles'.

Maintaining distinct groups or bubbles that do not mix makes it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case, to identify those who are close contacts and may need to self-isolate and keeping that number as small as possible.

When a school has a positive case of COVID-19, all those who are in the bubble are immediately asked to self-isolate and work from home as a precautionary and preventative measure whilst the **Test, Trace, Protect** process gets underway to identify those individuals that are direct contacts.

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Those who have had close contact with the case are required to self-isolate in line with national guidance, for 14 days after their last known contact with the positive case. This could involve the whole bubble. This is to prevent further transmission of the virus; ensuring that if learners (or staff) are carrying the virus (even without symptoms), they do not come into contact with others and potentially spread the virus further.

If it is established your child has not come into contact with the individual concerned, then you will be notified by the school with a date they can return to class (as long as they are fit and well with no symptoms).

Social distancing

All schools have undertaken risk assessments and follow Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidance relating to the management of COVID-19. While every effort is being made in and around each school, I would request your support in ensuring that we keep school communities safe. In this respect I would ask that you continue to follow all national and local guidance not only in and around the school, in particular when dropping off /collecting your children, but at all times. This is important as we are aware that COVID-19 is circulating within the community and we must all play our part in making the school community as safe as possible.

Pupil behaviour

Please can I remind parents/carers that good pupil behaviour remains a priority. Schools will act appropriately should behaviour issues present and will use the necessary sanctions should this be necessary.

Parking outside/on school premises

Pick-up and drop-off times can be very busy around the school due to the numbers of children on site. Therefore, I would ask that parents/carers consider the safety of the children when driving and parking in the proximity of our schools. I would be grateful if you could ensure that you drive and park safely in appropriate areas, even if this means a longer walk to the school gates. If you cannot comply with social distancing requirements outside school, you are advised to wear face coverings when dropping off and picking up your child- parents in the Llanelli Health Protection Zone have done this effectively over the last few weeks.

I would like to reassure you that the local authority is working closely with our Headteachers and staff in all our schools in order for them to remain open in accordance with Welsh Government guidance. Our staff are working hard to ensure that the whole school community remains safe. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed and are amended in light of the latest guidance received in order to minimise any risks.

I appreciate that this is an anxious time for families and your co-operation is much appreciated. I hope you have a wonderful half term break.

Thank you, once again, for your ongoing support,

Gareth Morgans

Director of Education and Children's Services

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