



**Cyngor Sir Powys / Powys County Council
Neuadd Y Sir / County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys LD1 5LG**

9 June 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

We want to share with you the latest information about the phased re-opening of schools in Powys.

The Minister for Education in Wales, Kirsty Williams, announced on 3 June 2020 that all children would have the opportunity to 'Check in, Catch up, Prepare' for summer and September. The next phase will start on 29 June 2020 with term extended by a week and will end on 27 July 2020.

This is an anxious time for everyone. We know that we have seen a fall in COVID-19 cases nationally and your actions have made a big contribution to this. We also know that some families and children have found lockdown very difficult to cope with. Some will have been personally affected with loss and grief, others will have encountered financial challenges and we have all experienced change and uncertainty. The next stage is how we can now open things up gradually and sensibly so that we do not see an increase in cases locally.

We know you will feel uncertain and have many questions about your child's individual circumstances. We want to help deal with those questions and address your concerns.

The safety of children and staff is our priority.

Pupils who are in receipt of a shielding letter due to their medical vulnerability or who live in a household with someone who is in receipt of a shielding letter should not return to school.

School leadership teams will be carrying out risk assessments to help them identify the approach that is right in your child's school.

As a council, we acknowledge that not all schools will be able to meet the Welsh Government's ambitions immediately. Capacity in schools will vary and many schools will need to introduce a phased re-integration. This might affect the year groups that can attend and the days available.

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Schools will work very differently, at least for the rest of this summer term. Class sizes will be small and schools will implement social distancing. This means lessons may run differently, break times and lunch times may be staggered, school start and finish times may be different.

We will be working closely with schools and governors to try to ensure consistency in terms of principles and approach. Because some children will be in school while others are at home, teachers will need to consider how they can balance the various approaches to teaching.

If your child requires home to school transport, these arrangements will change as strict safety and social distancing arrangements will be applied on the vehicles. We will provide further details in due course.

We know that schools not being fully open can create difficulties for working parents and will be creating a set of frequently asked questions for the council's website at www.powys.gov.uk/schools which will be published later this week.

As a local authority and individual schools, we now need to plan carefully for the re-opening of schools and need to know how many children will attend school during this period and how they will be travelling to and from school and we have created a survey for parents to fill in.

You will need to complete the survey individually for each child.

You can access the survey here - <https://tinyurl.com/school-reopening-survey> - and your responses will help us and your school greatly with our planning process. Please complete the survey **for each individual child** as soon as possible and by Friday, June 12 at the latest.

The Education Minister has said that pupils are expected to attend school. However, we know that personal circumstances can change for parents and carers. These changing circumstances might influence your decision whether to send your child to school or not. We will be understanding of this, whatever your decision, over this challenging period.

Thank you in anticipation of your continued support. I will write to you as soon as we have received further guidance from Welsh Government.

Cllr Phyl Davies
Cabinet Member for Education and Property

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