

Risca Primary School

Return to School Newsletter No. 3
June 16th 2020



Dear Mums and Dads,

I hope that you are all well, and that where possible your children are beginning to look forward to returning to school. The school leadership team is now spending time in school, continuing to prepare the building. Teachers are continuing to set home learning. We hope that all children will continue to complete their online learning in preparation for their return to school. We really want to keep their minds busy! I am sure that you will agree that that is important.

If you have had time to read the information guidance that I have sent to you, you will have read that pupils need to attend school for a minimum of 3 sessions between now and the end of term. We are working on this principle and are preparing timetables to ensure that we can accommodate all pupils over the duration of these next few weeks. During the day, we will focus on the children's wellbeing, and offer them some form of physical exercise (socially distanced of course), and also we will be looking to deliver some 'light' sessions which will refresh their basic skills. As we will be doing some physical exercise every day, (weather permitting), we would ask that until the end of term children attend school in their PE kit/joggers. Many thanks.

During their time in school, mainstream pupils will spend their time in a group, no larger than 8 pupils. The children will spend time in their classroom and outdoors within these pupil groups, or 'bubbles'. Throughout the day we will be adhering to Welsh Government Guidance which states that school should 'avoid multiple groups of learners from interacting or having the opportunity to mix'. Therefore for the entirety of the day these groups will stay together. This protocol is designed to support the Test Trace and Protect initiative, designed to limit the spread of the virus.

When considering the return to school for our pupils, we have now had updated guidance. It is important to note that for the next four weeks this only relates to pupils of **statutory school age**. Therefore, for the next four weeks **school will not be open to Nursery or Rising 3 pupils**. Learning for these pupils will continue to be online. Thank you for your understanding.

I know that there will be some parents who will be concerned about how their children will transition to their next class. In particular, I refer to newcomers to Nursery in September, Nursery to reception and year 2 to year 3. Please bear with us. We are currently looking at transition, but we are unable to share any details yet. Our plans will depend on our capacity

to manage mainstream and hub pupils effectively. Once that has been established, we will send out further information.

In terms of our building, we have now re-purposed Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 classrooms. We have also measured up our yard to ensure that all pupils can line up in a socially distanced manner. We are drawing up timetables to ensure that entry and exit times to school are staggered, along with lunchtime and breaktime. This may mean that your child uses a different entry/exit door from usual for the next four weeks. As soon as we know how many pupils plan to return we will be allocating days and dates for each pupils. If you haven't replied to our request for the information, can I kindly ask that you either e-mail the school or contact your child's teacher via see-saw.

Lunch will be taken at the pupils' desks which will be disinfected and cleaned before the lunch session. More details on lunchtime provision will follow.

When considering staffing, as mentioned in my last newsletter, we have some staff who cannot attend work as they are vulnerable or shielding. Additionally, we have to take into consideration medical needs of staff. The guidance is clear that we should not place vulnerable staff in a setting where pupils are unable to adhere to social distancing. Therefore we will have to re-organise staffing structures where necessary. We are currently working on this and as soon as the plan is finalised we will share the details with you.

For the next few weeks school will be running hub provision as well as usual classroom provision. This means that we will be running additional provision in our school to accommodate those workers whose childcare requests have been approved by the Local Authority. Please note that ALL requests for Hub provision must go through the Local Authority. School cannot approve any placements. In addition please note that the Hub provision according to the guidance is '**for learners who are currently using of Hub provision**' The only exception to this is for teachers and staff now returning to schools. To qualify for Hub provision the guidance states that '**ALL adults in the family home must be critical to the Covid 19 response and must be on the workplace, which means that the children cannot be safely cared for**'

It is important to note that whilst running the hub provision we must be sure to adhere to Welsh Government Guidance which clearly states that schools should consider 'avoiding multiple groups of learners from interacting or opportunity to mix'. **Therefore should a pupil require hub provision that pupil will stay in that hub provision all week, and will be unable to spend time in class with year group classmates.**

I think that you can see that school will look different when we open on the 29th June. I know that staff are looking forward to seeing the children, but we are aware that we all will need to get used to different routines and protocols for the next four weeks. We will all be working differently, and will have to respect new routines and new personal space. As soon as we have finalised those new protocols we will begin to send them out. Additionally, we are awaiting supplies of tape and signage from the Local Authority. As soon as these arrive and we can fully mark up our building we will begin to put photographs onto our website so that you can see how the building has been repurposed.

I hope that this begins to answer some of your questions about reopening. We are fully aware that we haven't got all of the answers yet, but please be reassured that we are working consistently towards opening and making our environment safe. Many thanks, stay safe,

Mrs Arthur and Staff.