

# Urgent: Emergency Childcare (Hub Class) Information

Friday Jan 15th 2021



I apologise for writing to you again about our emergency childcare provision in school, however this message is essential, whilst we continue to work within our community to keep everyone safe.

As you know we started hosting our emergency childcare hub classes last week. Since then the numbers of children attending these 'hub' classes have grown and we are now in the position of having to add another class to this provision.

Initially, when receiving the large influx of critical worker applications from the Local Authority, we contacted everyone who submitted an application, and in the interests of supporting our parents and community, offered places to pupils. As I have already confirmed, the staff at Risca Primary School are acutely aware of the need to support critical workers, and especially aware of the need to support our Emergency Service Workers who are absolutely on the front line in the fight against this virus which is causing so much pain and grief within our communities. I know that we are all very aware and very grateful of the vital role that the Emergency Service Workers play within our community, and the wider community.

As time has progressed our willingness to support the community has resulted in our numbers for emergency childcare places rising considerably over the last week, and we are still aware of outstanding applications which have not yet been processed by the Local Authority.

This is now defeating the 'stay at home' message, and is putting more children, staff and families at risk.

I know that I have reiterated the criteria for emergency childcare for critical workers already in a number of newsletters. These are:

- Your child must be of school age and registered to a Caerphilly school.
- One parent must be a critical worker.
- Where there is a second parent or adult in the household they must ALSO be a critical worker and MUST be required to attend the workplace (eg. not working from home) and the child cannot be safely cared for at home.

We are now going through all applications in detail as there may be some confusion with the criteria. We are also aware that not all parents have provided all of the required information. E.g. in some circumstances employment details of both parents have not been provided, and in some cases the information that we have received may be incorrect. I understand that this may have happened due to the rush to secure childcare but it is now important that we ensure that all pupils to whom we have allocated a place, are entitled for that provision to be ongoing. This will ensure that we are able to minimise the risk of the transmission of the virus, whilst ensuring ongoing provision for critical workers who qualify for support.

To be clear, if there are two parents/adults in the household both must be critical workers, and both should be working in the workplace and not from home.

Welsh Government Guidance states that ‘ Being included on the (critical worker) list does not mean that children of all workers of all categories can or will be able to continue to send their children to school. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure that their child is kept at home. **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be**’.

If you believe that you may have misunderstood the guidance then I would ask you to please contact us as a matter of urgency. We are currently going through all applications and will be in contact with you shortly should we need additional information.

Please be reassured that should your role be critical to the Covid 19 response then your application will always be prioritised, in accordance with Welsh Government Guidance. We are absolutely committed to supporting the children of critical workers, but I am sure that you will understand that we also need to establish an environment which minimises the risks of transmission between pupils, staff and our community.

Many thanks for your understanding,

Mrs Arthur.

