

Risca Primary School

Return to School Newsletter No. 1

June 5th 2020



Dear Mums and Dads,

Firstly, I hope that you and your families are all well. I know that this has been an extremely unusual time for everyone, and it seems such a long time since we closed the school in March. Can I thank you for all of your patience and support. Can I also thank you for supporting your children to send us such fantastic home learning. I know that the teachers have really enjoyed seeing the childrens' work, and have enjoyed the see-saw chats! We know that we have all faced a few challenges. My challenge has been to get to grips with a range of new technologies, and I know that many families have had that same challenge. Personally, I have been very lucky to have my three adult children here at home with me, and when I have reached a technological 'brick wall' they have been here to help me. Can I thank all of you who have worked with us to support your child access all of the home learning. I know that for some of you, the technologies were new. Many thanks for your hard work and patience.

I know that many of you will have listened to the Education Minister's statement during the Welsh Government briefing on Wednesday.

You will know that the Minister closed schools at the end of March. Since then, our staff have been working in the Risca Hub to provide childcare for the children of key-workers and vulnerable children, including during the Easter and half term holiday. Additionally, school staff have also provided home learning activities and have been in contact with you and your children through a range of learning platforms.

However, on Wednesday the minister has announced that:

- Statutory schooling will re- start - schools will open on 29th June 2020.
- Schools will be open to all year groups, for limited periods
- Only a maximum of a third of pupils will be in school at one time
- Schools will need time to reach this level
- All children will have the opportunity to 'check in, catch up, prepare for the summer and September'.
- Schools and Local Councils will make their own decisions on how this is managed
- The summer term will be extended by one week and therefore the summer term will now end on Monday July 27th.

- The Autumn term half term break will also be extended by a week.

As a school we have already been planning for a wide range of scenarios. We heard the Minister's announcement at the same time as you. We will now need some time to further plan and prepare, and we will work with the Governing Body, Local Authority, Welsh Government to develop plans, procedures, policies and robust risk assessments. At the heart of our processes will be the safety of children, staff and parents. We have already begun to repurpose our classrooms to ensure that we can welcome and teach children safely, whilst maintaining good social distancing.

There will be much guidance issued to Heads within the next few days. We have recently heard that the necessary guidance for schools will be with us by the middle of next week, possibly Wednesday. As a school we will need time to digest and plan to ensure that we follow this guidance and to ensure that this is used to create safe, practical operating systems that we all understand and adhere to. As a school we will do all that we can to ensure that the warm, welcoming nature of our school is maintained, but I am sure that you will understand that safety procedures and other routines will mean that daily schooling will look very different from the time before school closed in March. This was noted by the Minister.

We fully plan to keep you updated, and I would kindly ask that you bear with us, whilst we absorb the new guidance and refine our outline ideas for re-opening. As soon as I have any more information I will be in touch, so that you can make an informed decision whether your child(ren) will be attending.

Many thanks once again. Please continue to stay safe,

Mrs Arthur and Staff.