



Powys County Council
County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG

Date: 16 December 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

As we approach the end of term and the end of 2021, we would like to thank you in what has been another extremely difficult and challenging year.

The pandemic continues to place additional stresses on everyone, particularly parents and carers and our schools.

We're aware that a number of schools in Wales are either moving to blended learning or closing early. However, it is the intention that schools in Powys will still finish on the last day of term, Wednesday, December 22.

The spring term will soon be here and it only right that we inform you what the plans are for when learners return to their education settings after the Christmas holidays.

Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language, has today announced that he is providing all schools with two planning days at the start of the new spring term. This will allow schools time to assess staffing capacity and put the necessary measures in place to support the return of learners.

Following discussions with headteachers and teaching unions, it has been agreed that Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 January 2021 will be the preparation days for schools in Powys.

These days will allow schools to review their risk assessments, processes and systems to ensure that the school will be safe for the return of learners.

It has also been agreed that Friday 7 January 2021 will see all schools deliver blended learning to learners but will be open for vulnerable children and children of key/critical workers.

Those early year settings that provide 30 hours childcare a week should not be affected but we would urge parents and carers to check with their early year setting to see whether they are operating.

It is our intention that all learners will return to their education settings on Monday, 10 January 2022. However, this will be dependent on Coronavirus levels in the New Year so it is important that families do everything that they can to keep themselves and others safe.

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There is also a strong expectation from the Welsh Government that all school-based staff and learners of secondary age and above should test three times a week using lateral flow tests (LFTs). Testing should be carried out on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday in the week before returning to school and then continue to test regularly three times week when learners return to their secondary school.

We must make it clear that we are still in the grip of this pandemic. Parents should continue to be on their guard for coronavirus and keep unwell children away from school and early year settings even if symptoms seem very mild.

The return to school in January needs to be as safe as possible for all of our learners and our staff and we would urge every family to follow the latest Coronavirus rules so that when learners do return to their school in January that it safe as possible for all.

Finally, we would like to wish everyone a happy and safe Christmas break and look forward to seeing children and young people back in schools and early year settings in January.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Phyl Davies
Cabinet Portfolio for Education and Property

Lynette Lovell
Director of Education

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