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Our Ref./Ein Cyf. LP/

Your Ref./Eich Cyf.

Contact:/Cysylltwch â: Lynn Phillips

Date:/ Dyddiad: 22nd October 2020



Dear Parent/Carer,

Further to Welsh Government's announcement that a short sharp 'firebreak' period will come into effect between 6pm on Friday, 23rd October and Monday, 9th November 2020. This is to help regain control of the spread of Coronavirus in Wales and prevent the NHS from becoming overwhelmed.

Blaenau Gwent's schools and the Local Authority have worked closely together to respond to the challenges of supporting learners through the Coronavirus pandemic to provide Covid secure learning environments and this will continue following half-term. I would respectfully suggest that learners adhere to the 'firebreak' advice in community settings and reinforce the need for parents/ carers to relay this message to their children at this crucial point in time.

For more information about this 'firebreak' please go to the Welsh Government's website where you will find some Frequently Asked Questions - <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-firebreak-frequently-asked-questions#section-53247>

There is recognition at a national, regional and local levels that schools are working effectively to minimise the transmission of COVID-19 in learning settings, however, the education sector are expected to make a contribution to the 'firebreak' requirements during the emergency period. Therefore, the following position for the provision of education and childcare has been confirmed:

- Primary Schools and Special schools will reopen as normal after the half-term break on Monday, 2nd November;
- Years 7 and 8 in Secondary Schools will also return on Monday, 2nd November, as well as provision for learners taking exams in November;
- Years 9, 10 and 11 in Secondary Schools will access remote learning;
- Teachers are expected to continue to work from schools;
- College students will continue their learning from home for the week beginning Monday, 2nd November;



The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English and we will communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.
Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn cyfathrebu gyda chi yn eich dewis iaith, dim ond i chi rhoi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

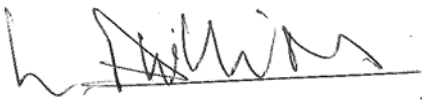


- Childcare settings will remain open;
- Informal childcare is permitted under the regulations e.g. family support;
- Free School Meal direct payments will be available for all eligible pupils who cannot attend schools for either 'firebreak' or self-isolation reasons; and,
- Schools can accommodate the most vulnerable children from Monday, 2nd November. We are awaiting further guidance from Welsh Government on this approach and more information will be available in due course.

I am pleased that the Welsh Government has confirmed that education remains a top priority throughout this short 'firebreak' period and that schools will re-open as normal after the half-term break for the majority of our pupils. Where learning is required to be carried out remotely, I would like to reassure you that our schools have put together substantial plans for home learning and will be there to support pupils during this time. We also continue to support our digitally excluded learners so all pupils have access to devices in order to study.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all parents and carers for their continued support for our schools during what has been a very difficult time for everyone, and I would urge you all to continue to follow the latest public health advice and keep you and your families safe over the coming weeks and months.

Yours faithfully,



Lynn Phillips
Interim Corporate Director for Education
Blaenau Gwent Council