

To: Parents/Carers

Gofynnwch Am:

Please Ask For:

Rhif Est:

Telephone N°:

Ffacs:

Fax:

E-Bost:

E-Mail:

Cylichlythyr:

Circular:

Gaynor Davies

01443 744001

Fy nghyf: GD/TM
My Ref:

Eich Cyf: Your Ref:

Dyddiad: 28th September 2020
Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

COVID-19 UPDATE

In these uncertain and unsettling times, I thought it would be helpful to highlight how we are all working together to minimise the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. Our school leaders and staff are working hard to keep our child/ren safe by

- consistently implementing their COVID-19 health and safety plans to minimise risks
- staggering start and finish times
- ensuring effective hand and respiratory hygiene and high cleaning standards in schools
- maintaining discrete contact groups in school where possible (class size contact groups at primary level; class, half-year or year group size contact groups in years 7-9; year group size contact groups in years 10-13)
- encouraging social distancing where this is possible, whilst acknowledging the challenges of achieving this in some confined spaces, e.g. classroom settings
- strongly recommending the use of face coverings for secondary age pupils at bus stops, on school transport and in communal areas
- taking swift action in the event of any confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 and ensuring self-isolation of confirmed and close contacts at the earliest opportunity
- using personal protective equipment where this is needed.

We now have confirmed COVID-19 cases in some of our schools. Schools cannot completely eradicate risks but they can take effective actions to minimise transmission risks. Numbers of COVID-19 cases are still relatively small but we need your support in minimising the spread. To achieve this, can you please ensure that your child

Tŷ Trevithick
Abercynon, Aberpennar, CF45 4UQ
Abercynon, Mountain Ash, CF45 4UQ

Ffôn/Tel: 01443 744000
Ffacs/Fax: 01443 744024

Gaynor Davies
Cyfarwyddwr Addysg a Gwasanaethau Cynhwysiant | Director of Education and Inclusion Services

Dewiswch iaith a diwyg eich dogfen | Available in alternative formats and languages

Croesawn ohebu yn Gymraeg a fydd gohebu yn y Gymraeg ddim yn arwain at oedi. Rhwch wybod inni beth yw'ch dewis iaith e.e Cymraeg neu'n ddwyieithog.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. Let us know your language choice if Welsh or bilingual.



MAE EICH DATA O BWYS www.rctcbc.gov.uk/diogeludata
YOUR DATA MATTERS www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection



- does not come to school if s/he and any family members display signs of COVID-19
- does not come in to schools if s/he or any immediate family members are awaiting any test results for COVID-19
- self-isolates when this required by the school or Contact Tracing Services
- wears a face covering at bus stops, on school transport or in communal areas in schools if in secondary education
- walks to school where possible
- is dropped off where required by one parent/carer only and that social distancing is maintained outside the school
- does not walk to and from school with groups of learners and maintains social distance on the journey
- avoids social gatherings with friends
- engages in distance learning with the schools when self-isolating to ensure continuity in learning.

The Council has advised schools to follow key processes when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in school. These processes are informed by Welsh Government and Public Health Wales guidance and schools are supported by the Council's Education and Inclusion and Public Health and Protection Services to make swift and appropriate decisions. Information is also shared with the Regional Contact Tracing Service and Public Health Wales.

1. **Positive cases**

If your child is suspected of having COVID-19 symptoms, they will immediately be sent home from school and advised to get a test. The school will contact you to arrange their collection from school as they should not travel on school or public transport. In the event of your child testing positive for COVID-19, they must self-isolate for 10 days from the date of onset of symptoms. The rest of your household should self-isolate for 14 days. Other household members of close contacts will only need to get a test if they themselves develop symptoms.

2. **Potential close contacts**

All individuals in the same class or contact group as someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 may receive a letter from the school advising them to self-isolate for an initial 24 hour period to allow for in-depth contact tracing and deep cleaning to be undertaken. You will be notified, by the school, within the following 24 hours whether your child can return to school and stop self-isolating, or whether they need to self-isolate for a further 13 day period. Other members of your household including other children can continue normal activities during this self-isolation period.

3. **Confirmed close contacts**

In the event of a confirmed case, your child may be identified as a close contact of a confirmed case by the school and/or the Regional Contact Tracing Service following a review of school based information. Schools will do their best to identify close contacts based on the knowledge that is available to them. If you feel that your child has been a close contact and has not been identified as one, please make urgent contact with your school. As I am sure you will appreciate it is not always possible to be aware of every single interaction between every single child but schools will make a proportionate assessment based on the information available to them.

If the Contact Tracing process identifies that your child is a close contact of a confirmed case, further advice and guidance relating to self-isolation will be given.

A **close contact** is:

- someone within 1 metre of you with whom you have had a face-to-face conversation, had skin-to-skin physical contact, you have coughed on, or been on other forms of contact within 1 metre for 1 minute or longer;
- someone within 2 metres of you for more than 15 minutes;
- someone you have travelled in a vehicle with, or seated near you in public transport.

The wearing of a face covering can reduce the need for close contacts to self-isolate which is why the wearing of face masks on school buses and communal areas is so important.

If your child is identified as a close contact, your child must self-isolate for 14 days and not return to school until the date given in the letter received from the school. This is because it can take up to 14 days for the symptoms to develop.

During the period of self-isolation, you will also be required to monitor your child for any symptoms so that you get them tested as soon as possible if needed. **Symptoms of COVID-19** include:

- fever (greater than 37.8°C);
- new persistent/continuous cough; and/or
- loss or change in sense of taste or smell.

If your child is a close contact, members of your household family are not required to self-isolate but should follow the general social distancing guidance during the isolation period. However, if anyone in your household develops any of these symptoms, however mild, they need to stay at home (10 days for the person with symptoms and 14 days for the rest of the household), seek a test as soon as possible and follow the guidance at <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>.

Further detail on **how to apply for a test** is provided at <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test> or simply call the free phone number 119 between the hours of 7am to 11pm. Please make sure you keep your child's school informed.

If your child is well at the end of this period of self-isolation, they can then return to school. Other members of your household including other children can continue normal activities provided your child does not develop symptoms within the self-isolation period. Further information on Coronavirus can be found on the Council's website at <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk>.

The process of **testing and contact tracing** is part of the 'new normal' where schools and settings are required to follow these guidelines carefully. The latest information on Coronavirus testing and tracing can be found on the Welsh Government's website on <https://gov.wales/education-settings-coronavirus-testing-and-contact-tracing-guidance>.

Please note that schools will remain open for all other pupils who are not close contacts with a confirmed case. Schools will continue to follow guidelines and risk assessment plans to ensure that all children and staff remain safe.

Attached are two user friendly guides for parents and carers.

I appreciate that this is a concerning time and the school and the Council will provide support and guidance if required. If you require further information, please check the Council website for updated information on managing COVID-19, or if you require medical advice please contact 111 or your general practitioner.

Thank you in anticipation of your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gwynor Davies".

Director of Education and Inclusion Services