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12/6/2020

Dear Parents /Guardians,

Developments going forward regarding returning to Penclawdd Primary School on June 29th 2020

As always, our priority is keeping our children and school community safe.

I am now in a position to update you a little more about the **phased** return to school of our R-Y6 pupils on Monday June 29th 2020, for the **'Check In, Catch Up and Prepare'** sessions. The Education Minister has clearly announced that these sessions are voluntary and parents can use their own discretion whether to send their child to school or not. (Please see link below).

<https://gov.wales/check-catch-prepare-summer-and-september-all-schools-wales-enter-next-phase>

Before writing we have taken our time to carefully consider the guidance and all the relevant information available to us. All schools are directed by both Welsh Government and LA guidance and a set of guiding principles regarding the phased return to school, which were received from the LA yesterday. **I want to reassure you that the safety and well-being of our school community is paramount in all the decision making processes that we will undertake as a school.** This will be a phased return, as we progress towards admitting up to a third of our pupils at any one time.

Alongside the Senior Leadership Team and Governors, we are putting a plan into place for the phased return of our children. I commenced that plan by asking you at the beginning of last week to indicate if your child will be returning. Many thanks for those of you who replied. If you have not replied, for the purpose of planning I will take this as a **no** to returning to school on the 29th June, at this time.

How is Penclawdd Primary School preparing for the return

I want to assure parents that from last week our staff have been back in Penclawdd Primary to get things in place for the changes to our school and how we manage to adhere to the 2 metre social distancing rule. We wanted to demonstrate to you as parents that we are starting to prepare and the children's safety is of paramount importance to us. We currently have rigorous risk assessments for the emergency childcare setting and we are now looking at a range of systems to help us for when we return to Penclawdd Primary School. Every school's procedures need to comply with local and national guidance and ensure that they are as safe as possible for children and staff. **Therefore, as a school we will only offer what is practical and safe.**

What will be the focus of the 'Check In, Catch Up and Prepare' session?

At Penclawdd Primary our pupils will be supported in their wellbeing and learning. We will focus on responding to children's emotional health and wellbeing needs and ensuring that there is continuity between our school-based support and home learning. There will be a balance of indoor and outdoor learning. Home learning packs for children will continue to be provided until the end of term.

How will the 'Check In, Catch Up and Prepare' sessions be organised?

R- Y6 will have the opportunity to attend school for 'Check In, Catch Up and Prepare' sessions from 29th June – 24th July in **groups of 8 or less**.

By the middle of next week we will be in a position to provide parents with more specific details regarding the organisation, year group sessions and days that your child can attend school. Each class teacher will make a short little video to show their class and write a letter that includes the details of the 'Check In, Catch Up and Prepare' sessions for your child/family (we aim for siblings to attend on the same day).

Childcare for keyworkers

From the 29th June - July 24th, we will be commencing childcare at Penclawdd Primary School for **key workers** (who qualify as per the criteria, please see below). The school will operate the childcare hours as agreed by the LA from 8.30am -3.30pm. I will be in a position to answer questions regarding childcare, at the end of next week. I will also be communicating details regarding the maximum places available for childcare for key workers. Emergency Childcare from June 29th 2020

Child Care Criteria

Both parents need to meet one of the following criteria and NEED childcare or you are a single parent which meets the criteria and NEEDS childcare:

- *Health and social care
- *Education and childcare
- *Key public services
- *Local and national government
- *Food and other necessary goods
- *Public safety and national security
- *Transport
- *Utilities, communication and financial services

I'm sure that you will appreciate that offering key worker childcare in school whilst providing our children with the 'Check In, Catch Up and Prepare' sessions, requires the school to reach a balance of pupils, based on the maximum numbers we can have in school at any one time. **We will be governed by our stringent health and safety measures within the risk assessment and operational guidance and again safety will be paramount.**

What we have observed and learnt from the emergency setting has taught us that children respond well to the new systems. We will use what we have learnt and apply it to a larger scale.

Nursery update

Following a Headteacher meeting yesterday regarding the return to school, we have now been informed by the LA that no school in Swansea will be inviting Nursery to return before September.

Transition for all classes

Transition plans regarding meeting the new class teacher will be shared at a later date. Y6 "virtual" transition has already commenced for most pupils. I feel it is very important to announce that we also be offering our Y6 pupils some additional contact "as a Y6 group " (adhering to social distancing) on the last week of term. More information to be shared with Y6 at a later date.

To conclude, we appreciate that there will be apprehension and uncertainty. Therefore, *by next week in my letter to parents I will be writing:*

- a detailed update of the steps we will be taking to keep everyone safe

- to explain how our school environment, procedures and operation have been adapted in order to accommodate, as safely as possible, the return of our children. These arrangements will be reviewed regularly and will be subject to change wherever necessary, placing the safety of pupils and staff at the centre of consideration.
- to reassure you as much as I can possibly can.

Here are some of the safety measures that we will be implementing :

- Staff training regarding the risk assessment and return to school
- Restricted access to school to manage risk
- No parents/ visitors on school premises
- Children will come / leave through a staff managed gate (staggered)
- Children will line up on markers that are 2 metres apart in the corridor
- Hand sanitisers will be available in all classrooms and at key points around the school.
- Children will only be in groups of small numbers
- The yards will be zoned / timetabled.
- The staff car park will be used for the children's play area to extend their available space to adhere to the 2 m distance.
- Posters will be around the school to remind the children of distancing, washing hands, no holding hands with each other.
- Older children will sit on an individual table , in rows apart.
- No equipment to be brought into school – pupils will have equipment named in their trays.
- Spots on the carpet where the children will sit at 2m apart.
- The school will be regularly cleaned throughout the day.
- All breaktimes will be on a rota system adhering to the 2m distance at all times.
- No assembly.
- We are planning a lot of outdoor learning activities.

We would like to THANK YOU all once again for the fantastic job you are doing at home keeping things as normal as you possibly can for the children. You are doing an INCREDIBLE job. As always, I will also respect and understand any decisions you make in the best interests of your child and you have my support with this.

We have received the data from the LA questionnaire for parents and are pleased to see that 86% of our parents are happy with the home learning that staff have provided. Thanks to those of you who took the time to write a comment about how we could improve. We will take these things on board as we prepare for our approach to blended learning in September.

We know that good communication is essential to managing worries, so if you have any concerns or questions please email the school on penclawdd.primary@swansea-edunet.gov.uk or message the classteacher via Seesaw. *During this extremely busy time, I may not respond as usual via Seesaw. Thank you for your patience.*

Stay safe everyone.

Mrs R-M  

Louisa Reynolds -Milnes
Headteacher Penclawdd Primary School