

*Please ask for:*

*Direct Line:*

*E-Mail:*

*Our Ref:*

*Your Ref:*

*Date:* 21 October 2020

Dear Parent/ Carer

The safe reopening of schools in Swansea has been successful during the first half-term of the school year.

When I wrote to you in September, I reminded you of the importance of safe social distancing outside the school and the need to take part in testing, tracing and protecting as well as all the safety planning schools had followed.

We have developed a very cautious approach in listening to the advice of NHS Test Trace Protect (TTP) here in Swansea. As a result, schools in Swansea are not the source of Covid-19 transmission and children and young people are protected when in school.

All children and young people are following the school rules and are careful about washing hands and wearing a face mask if they need to. However, schools and providers of education are being disrupted when a community transmitted case comes in from the outside. May I urge you once again to keep a close eye on symptoms and to follow the rules, especially now that we are entering a national circuit breaker or 'fire break'.

Swansea expects half-term to run as normal and that all primary schools, special schools, and the pupil referral unit will remain open during the week commencing 2 November. We expect that children who should be in school will attend from 2 November onwards, this also includes years 7 and 8 in secondary schools.

In secondary schools, it is only year 9 and above who will stay at home for the week commencing 2 November. All students sitting examinations in secondary schools will however be allowed access to examinations. Your school will tell you more, if you need to know about specialist teaching facilities in secondary schools, or whether examination year groups can attend for revision sessions.

Across Swansea, all school staff will be expected to be in work during the week commencing 2 November. Your secondary school will be able to tell you more about how they will operate teaching and learning for year 9 pupils and above for the five school days, when a circuit breaker affects them.

Free school meal provision will continue during all school holidays between now and including Easter for all those entitled. Year 9 pupils and above will receive a food parcel or a BACS payment for the additional week they are not in school commencing 2 November. Pupils attending for examinations will be expected to bring their own packed lunch. For examination year groups and years 7 and 8 school transport will operate as normal.

I cannot emphasise strongly enough that all teachers, teaching assistants, support staff and headteachers have gone the extra mile to keep learning going. I would also like to stress how important it is that all parents and carers think twice about social gatherings inside and outside their homes during the next fortnight and beyond. Can I also remind you that if you are dropping off or collecting children from school then you need to follow social distancing and no matter how tempting please do not congregate at the school gates.

Children and young people have seen enough disruption to their education to last a lifetime and we must not spoil it anymore. Please think twice about any actions you may take, in innocence, in the face of an invisible virus. We do not want further disruptions or mini lockdowns, we want to keep learning going and our communities safe. Please challenge any behaviour that stops us from reaching our common goal of "An excellent education for all" here in Swansea.

Regards



Helen Morgan-Rees  
Interim Director of Education