



**Powys County Council
County Hall
Llandrindod Wells
Powys
LD1 5LG**

Date: 11 February 2021

Dear parent / carer,

As we approach half-term holidays, I would like to thank you for your support, understanding and patience since the turn of the year. I'm grateful to you all for everything you have done to assist your child's learning, your child's school and the council over the last few weeks.

At the end of last month (January), Education Minister Kirsty Williams announced plans for pupils to begin returning to school from Monday, February 22 in a phased approach and starting with the youngest learners in primary schools.

The council is working with its schools and early year settings to ensure that foundation phase-aged learners return safely after the February half-term.

The arrangements that will be in place to begin with will be for foundation phase learners in Early Years and Reception classes and Years One and Two (children aged of three to seven) and they are:

- Monday, February 22 – Preparation day ahead of the phased return of foundation phase-aged learners
- Learners in Early Years and Reception classes and Years One and Two will begin a phased and flexible return to their school / early years setting from Tuesday, February 23, aiming for all foundation phase learners to return by Friday, February 26.

Headteachers will contact parents or guardians with the specific details of their children's school.

All schools in Powys will be open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers in all age groups from Monday, February 22.

As learners return after the half term holidays, parents and carers are being asked to dress their children in warm clothes that are suitable for outdoor learning and so that schools can maintain ventilation for the safety of learners and staff.

Primary school learners aged eight and above and secondary school learners will continue with online learning until further notice.

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The safety of our learners and school staff is our main priority and we have been working with schools and early settings and helping them prepare for the return of learners.

The preparation day on Monday, February 22 will allow staff to ensure that everything is in place for the safe return of foundation phased-aged learners.

However, I want to make it clear that if circumstances change and there is an increase in Covid-19 transmission rates in the county, then our schools will only be open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

As schools prepare for the phased return of learners, it is crucial that all families play their part by following the guidance here in Wales and do not mix outside of school to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Many parents and schools' staff are concerned when they hear reports of inter-family mixing at events such as sleepovers.

After half-term, schools will still be open for children of critical workers as well as vulnerable learners in all age groups. However, a phased approach to opening schools is important to ensure the safety of our learners and staff, therefore other year groups need to remain at home.

I would like to thank schools for their ongoing efforts to support pupils during this difficult time and I would also like to thank parents for their patience and co-operation during this unprecedented period of disruption to our schools.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Phyl Davies
Cabinet Portfolio for Education and Property