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Dyddiad / Date: 1-09-21 E-bost / E-mail: CwestiwnECS@sirgar.gov.uk / QuestionECS@carmarthenshire.gov.uk

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope you and your family managed to have a break over the last few weeks after what has been a challenging time for all of us. Again I would like to thank you for your support and cooperation which has been greatly appreciated by our schools.

I wrote to you at the end of the Summer Term outlining how our schools would operate from September. The information shared was based on the advice at that time. Since then there have been many changes with Wales moving to **Alert Level 0** on the 7th of August.

The approach after the summer holidays reflects the progress that continues to be made with the vaccination rollout programme. By the end of September everyone working in our education system will have been offered both vaccinations, growing our defences against the virus. Current data on hospitalisation and severe illness also suggests that by the time schools return after the summer holidays, we can move beyond the very restrictive approach to dealing with COVID that has been necessary to date.

The following changes, as recommended by Welsh Government, will be implemented as soon as we can-

- **From the start of the new term we will no longer be recommending the routine wearing of face coverings in the classroom for staff or learners.** Schools and settings may however wish to encourage their use in areas where there is likely to be more social mixing, such as in communal areas. Face coverings should continue to be worn by learners in secondary schools and settings when travelling on dedicated school transport. If however an individual wishes to wear a face covering this will not be prevented.
- **We still require parents to wear face coverings** when dropping off or collecting children from school.
- **Contact groups/bubbles will no longer be recommended.** We will use our Test Trace and Protect system in order to identify close contacts of learners who have tested positive. However, your school might continue with some practices developed during the pandemic which have improved school operations e.g. keeping some classes together as units, designated entry points and play areas, staggered breaks.
- **Normal session times will resume** however your school might continue with some practices developed during the pandemic which have improved school operations.
- **Secondary school children and the education workforce are encouraged to carry out lateral flow testing before returning to school.**

By the start of term Welsh Government will have published the **Local COVID-19 Infection Control Decision Framework** which we will need to embed into our operations during the weeks that follow. The framework will enable schools to tailor some of the interventions to reflect the level of risk identified locally. Schools and settings will not be expected to make these decisions in isolation, they will continue to be supported by public health officials and their local authorities to ensure measures are appropriate to their own circumstances.

Your school will advise you of any further local arrangements and I will keep you informed of any further changes. Please visit our website carmarthenshire.gov.wales/education for updates and follow [@CarmsCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/CarmsCouncil) on Facebook and Twitter.

Yn gywir/ Yours sincerely,

Gareth Morgans

Gareth Morgans, BAdd/BEd; MGw/MSc

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Mae croeso i chi gysylltu â mi yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg

You are welcome to contact me in Welsh or English