

School Restart – Frequently Asked Questions for parents and pupils.

The Minister for Education in Wales has set out expectations that all children and young people in Wales should have some opportunities to attend their school in the remaining weeks of the summer term.

The focus of these sessions in school will be to “check in, catch up and prepare for summer and September.”

In line with Government guidance, Cardiff Council is working with schools to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and parents when they start reopening from June 29, 2020.

Schools will make arrangements according to their own circumstances and they will inform parents directly about the individual arrangements for their pupils.

Below you will find a series of Frequently Asked Questions that parents, carers and pupils may have.

General

Why are schools in Wales bringing all pupils back, when England are not?

- Since The Welsh Government announced the decision to close schools for statutory provision in March, our understanding of the virus and its longer-term impacts has continued to develop. We know that we are going to have to live with it for some time and that it will remain our biggest challenge for the foreseeable future.
- The Welsh Government are giving children and young people the opportunity to “check in, catch up and prepare” before the start of September. By doing this now it will give children vital contact time before the summer holiday which will have important social, learning and attainment gap benefits. This will help prepare pupils for contact time after the summer holidays and will also allow schools to test operations before the autumn term.

Health & Safety

What has been done to make schools safe?

- Each school has undergone a series of risk assessments and has worked with a dedicated Health & Safety Team to determine how it can operate safely. This includes new building and hygiene processes and social distancing measures.

Will the school be cleaned regularly?

- Yes, schools will be cleaned thoroughly prior to opening and enhanced cleaning regimes will take place twice daily with disinfectant to include hand contact surfaces including handrails, door handles, push pads, taps, flushes etc.

Will hand washing and sanitizer provided for children to use?

- Yes, regular hand-washing will become part of the school routine, the first stop for all pupils at the start of every day, and then on the hour thereafter. Hand sanitizer stations will be installed at key points within the school, including entrances to the school and close to toilet facilities.

How will schools ensure children are social distancing?

- Schools have undergone capacity and spacial assessments. Classroom furniture has been re-configured to allow additional space between pupils and floors have been covered with new markings to show pupils how far apart children need to stand. Schools will utilise outdoor areas where possible and some may implement a one way system.

Perspex screens will be located at face to face contact points to protect children and staff.

How will social distancing for drop off and pick up times be managed?

- Schools will stagger arrival and departure times where possible. In addition, a series of traffic schemes will be put in place at some schools to ensure the safety of children and families at drop-off or collection. This includes manned road closures, one way systems and the widening of pavements.
- Parents and carers are reminded to observe social distancing when dropping off and collecting their children and not to congregate during these times.

How can younger children social distance?

- It is acknowledged that social distancing for very young children may not be possible in all circumstances, therefore thorough cleaning regimes, good hand hygiene and staff use of PPE for some direct work with children will be in place. Grouping of younger children is also advised by Welsh Government, where Social Distancing would not be possible or indeed benefit younger children.
- Please see the Welsh Governments guidelines for protecting under 5's here: <https://gov.wales/protecting-staff-and-under-5-year-olds-coronavirus-childcare>

Will staff be wearing PPE or face masks?

- Following Welsh Government Guidance, face coverings should be worn when 2 metre distancing cannot be maintained. PPE will be worn by staff during instances of personal care, first aid or administering medicines.

Can my child wear a mask to school?

- The Welsh Government has issued guidance that face coverings should be worn when 2 metre distancing cannot be maintained, this is particularly relevant when travelling to/from school using school or public transport. The Council will provide children age 7 and above with a face covering to support safe travel to/from school. The Council will continue to monitor the requirement for face coverings in a school setting and will respond to any further recommendations for their use by Welsh Government.

Should my child attend school if they have any COVID symptoms, or live with someone who has COVID symptoms?

- Under no circumstances should pupils attend schools/setting if they:
 - o feel unwell, have any of the three identified COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of taste or smell) or they have tested positive to COVID-19 in the past 14 days
 - o live in a household with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive to COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- If your child is due to attend a session at school, please ring the school to report that your child or a family member is ill.

Will children have temperature checks on arrival to school?

No, however if a child seems poorly in school, their temperature maybe taken to determine appropriate controls required until they are collected from school.

Will staff and pupils be tested for COVID-19?

- All symptomatic members of the public, including critical workers and children, are now able to book a test, you can find more information here:
<https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-test>

What happens if someone at school tests positive for COVID-19?

- If someone shows symptoms at school, they will be kept separate in an isolation room until they can be collected and taken home. Anyone displaying symptoms should stay at home for 7 days and should arrange to be tested. Anyone who lives with someone displaying symptoms but remains well should stay at home for 14 days from the day the first person became ill.

Will staff receive an anti-body test?

- Education staff working in our schools will be a priority group in the new antibody testing Health will implement a programme in Cardiff schools from 29th June when schools return.

School Attendance

What if my child or someone in our family is shielding?

- If your child is shielding or if someone else in your household is shielding, they should not return to school at the end of June for the check-in sessions. Shielded children will continue to be supported by their schools in different ways.

What happens if I choose not to send my child into school before the end of term? Will I be fined?

- During this time, Welsh Government has taken the decision that parents won't be fined for keeping their child / children at home. These children will continue to be supported by their schools in different ways.

Will this affect their attendance records?

- No – Welsh Government have made adjustments to school attendance returns for this academic year, to ensure that children's attendance records are not affected.
- However, schools and settings should keep a record of attendance for those children that have sessions booked to return during this period and families should notify their school if their child is unable to attend. This will help schools, settings and local authorities plan for and understand any barriers to learners returning to school and identify any further support needed.

We are a BAME family, is it safe to send our children to school?

- The Welsh Government's All Wales COVID-19 Workforce Risk Assessment Tool, has been designed to help addresses individual risk factors, regardless of ethnicity.

The School day

Who decides which years will return and when?

- The Welsh Government has issued schools with advice that they should operate at a maximum of a third of their normal capacity, although this will be dependent on local factors such as staff availability and school layout. This means that not all children will be able to return to school on the same day. The aim is that all pupils will receive some face to face sessions with their teachers during this period and this will be supported by continued homebased learning. It is the decision of the individual school which groups they admit and on which days and this will be communicated by your child's school.

Will nursery and reception years be returning to school?

- We recommend that Nursery pupils do not return before September. Some schools that have staff availability will manage this locally.

If schools are still providing childcare for key workers, will there be space for other children to return?

- All schools will continue to provide key worker childcare.
- However, as no more than 30% of a school's children are expected to be in school at any one time to maintain health and safety disciplines, schools will need to carefully balance the number of childcare places and 'return to school' places that can be accommodated at any one time.
- The Local Authority will work with individual schools to support capacity judgements and to ensure that there is capacity to catch up, check in and prepare all other pupils, prior to the end of term.

How many children will be in a classroom at once?

- Each school has undergone a capacity assessment to identify how many pupils they can safely accommodate on site while allowing social distancing to be maintained. The layout, design and size of each school and its classrooms

is different. Therefore the numbers will vary from school to school, but we do know that classes will be split into smaller groups. .

Will secondary school pupils still have different teachers for different subjects or will they have one for the whole day?

- Ideally, when indoors, pupils should remain in the same room and avoid moving from room to room as they normally would. Pupils will be given as much opportunity as possible to learn and have breaks outdoors. Arrangements will be made by individual schools.

Will siblings be able to attend on the same day?

- This will be the decision of the individual school and parents will be contacted by the school directly.

Will my child be with their usual teacher?

- Where possible children will be able to be with their usual teacher, however some school staff may be shielding or shielding family members and will not be able to return to school at this time.

Will my child be with their friends?

- Classes will be split into groups depending on space and capacity. Who is in each group will be decided by the individual school and parents will be contacted by the school directly.

Will children have play time and how will social distancing be managed during these times?

- Yes, they will have break times and lunchtimes but they will be staggered to facilitate social distancing.

How many days will my child be in school and will it be normal school times?

- This will be the decision of the individual school and parents will be contacted by the school directly.

What does my child need to bring to school, do they need their own equipment?

- This will be communicated by each school.

Will children wear uniform?

- Decisions around school uniforms are the responsibility of the governing body however Welsh Government advises pupils should wear something that is comfortable and easily washable. Uniform that cannot be machine washed should be avoided.

Curriculum

Will my child be doing usual school work?

- The Welsh Government has said that the purpose of the school sessions will be to Catch Up, Check In and Prepare for summer and September. It is an opportunity for children to check in and catch up with their teacher and friends and to prepare for returning in September with the new changes around them. Therefore, the normal curriculum has been suspended for the remainder of the term.

My child is in Year 6 and due to start secondary school in September, will they have any contact with their new school?

- Secondary schools are working with primary schools to explore opportunities for year 6 pupils to have contact with their new school. All solutions must ensure that the health and safety of children is paramount. It is likely that most transition arrangements will be virtual for this reason.
- Some secondary schools have set up Virtual Transition Projects so that Year 6 pupils can find out more about their new school including information about staff, maps of the school, uniform, expectations as well as allowing them to post any questions they may have.

What is meant by 'blended' learning?

- Blended learning is a method of teaching that integrates technology and digital media with traditional in –school classroom activities, giving children more flexibility to learn in different learning environments. This approach will allow children to continue to access school – led learning whilst at home.
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When will schools go back to normal?

- Currently we just don't know the answer. We are guided by the Welsh Government and Public Health Wales. What happens over the next few months in relation to the rate of infection will impact on how schools operate over future months but it is unlikely that schools will return to the way they were before lockdown, for some considerable time.

School Leavers

My child is in Year 11 and due to begin college in September, will this be affected?

- The Welsh Government has issued information regarding colleges and post 16 education settings. This can be found here: <https://gov.wales/guidance-face-face-further-education-and-work-based-learning-coronavirus>

My child is leaving school this year, and will need support to make decisions about their future – for example getting into work, college or university. How can I get advice for them?

- You can email the Council at the following email address intoworkadvice@cardiff.gov.uk, or call 02920 87071 and one of our advisers

will make contact with you to offer support from our Youth Services or Into Work Services.

- You can also visit the Council's Into Work website, where a web chat option is available www.intoworkcardiff.co.uk

Summer Term dates

What date will the Summer Term end?

- The summer term will end on the 20th July.

Why is this different to the end of term date of 27th July that was originally announced by Welsh Government?

- Welsh Government and the school workforce Trade Unions have not been able to reach a common position on a fourth week in school despite ongoing discussions. Without such national agreement term dates remain a matter for local determination. At this late stage it is essential that head teachers and schools have clarity for planning the return of pupils in a week's time. Cardiff Council will therefore not be seeking variation to the existing term dates, with the end of term remaining at 20th July.

Will there be an extra week's holiday in the Autumn Term?

- Arrangements for the autumn term are still under discussion nationally. Updates will be provided when further information is available.

Catering

Will school meals be available?

- In order to protect the Health and Safety of pupils and students, there will be no food provision in mainstream primary and secondary schools during the remainder of the summer term.
- Depending on the length of a school session, schools may ask that pupils bring a packed lunch.

What if my child usually receives Free School Meals?

- The payment and voucher system for Free School Meals will continue and can be used to provide children with packed lunches should they require them.

Vulnerable Learners and children with Additional Learning Needs

Should medically vulnerable learners return to school before the summer break?

- Children and young people with serious underlying health conditions making them highly vulnerable, at high risk of developing serious illness if they are exposed to coronavirus (COVID-19), will have received a shielding letter from the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Wales. Learners in this category **must not** be asked to attend schools or settings but should be supported to learn from home.
- If a child or young person hasn't been advised to 'shield', but is considered to be clinically vulnerable, your school will update the risk assessment to identify any additional safety measures that can be taken to protect your child. If it is determined that your child cannot safely attend school at present, the school will continue to support learning at home.

My child has medical or intimate care needs. Can schools continue to provide support?

- The school will update the risk assessment for your child and discuss this with you.
- If staff need to have direct contact with your child, this will be discussed with you first. Health and safety advice will be followed, including additional hygiene and use of Personal Protective Equipment.

My child has a statement of special educational needs: will they still benefit from additional support?

- Schools will continue to provide appropriate levels of additional support for learners with ALN and, support staff will observe social distancing to ensure pupil and staff safety.

My child is hearing impaired and needs to see people's lips and facial expressions when they are speaking. What is the advice in relation to face masks?

- So that communication is not limited for children and young people with a Hearing Impairment, clear Face visors will be used when PPE is required.

If a child has been attending a Hub as a vulnerable learner, must schools maintain the same level of contact, with additional school contact?

- As schools open to all learners, they will need to consider capacity in terms of staffing and space, and the need for all learners to have the opportunity to access school. Schools will give particular attention to the needs of learners who have already been assessed as particularly vulnerable, and consider

whether they need additional access or the same level as they accessed when attending the Hub.

School transport

Where possible, parents and carers should travel with their children to and from school, ideally on foot, or by bike, scooter or any other means of active travel.

For those pupils who usually travel to school using school transport, and are unable to attend without it, priority will be given to pupils who qualify for free transport.

What happens if my child usually takes a bus to school?

- School transport will be available with additional safety measures in place. These will include;
 - To comply with physical distancing measures, pupil numbers will be restricted so that where possible, pupils can be 2 metres apart when travelling
 - Clear signage will show pupils which seats can be used and which are out of use
 - In following the Welsh Government guidance which says that face coverings should be worn when 2 metres cannot be maintained, pupils will be issued with 2 face masks in school that should be worn when travelling on school buses
 - Hand sanitiser gel dispensers will be in place at the entrance to the buses

What happens if child usually takes a taxi to school?

- Passenger numbers on taxis will be reduced to comply with social distancing requirements.
Individual risk assessments are currently being undertaken with schools and transport contractors, so that appropriate PPE is in place for passengers and transport staff.

Key Worker childcare

I am a key worker, can I still access childcare?

- The Council will endeavor to provide key worker childcare where possible, but there is limited availability as schools focus on 'Check in, Catch Up, Prepare' of pupils.
- Key worker childcare will remain as hub provision until Friday 26, June. However, from Monday 29, June children will access childcare at their own school.

How do I apply for key worker childcare?

You can apply for keyworker childcare on the Council's website here:
www.cardiff.gov.uk/keyworkerchildcare.

What time will childcare be available?

- From Monday 29, June childcare will be available from 8.30am – 4.30pm Monday – Friday.

Will food be provided at schools for children attending childcare?

- No. Parents will need to provide their children with enough food for the duration of the day –packed lunch etc.

Can my child attend their own school class sessions as well as childcare?

- Individual schools will provide advice on the scheduling of class sessions. If your child is due to attend a class session, they will be made aware of this, and would not attend the childcare during this period.

Will key worker childcare continue during summer holidays?

- Schools will not provide key worker childcare during the summer holidays. Welsh Government should advise upon their proposals in due course.

Who are the priority key worker groups to be able to access childcare hubs and how do I apply?

- Information about which key worker groups are eligible for childcare provision and how to apply can be found here: www.cardiff.gov.uk/keyworkerchildcare
- Please note, due to limited places the Council is unable to guarantee any places. When applying, your employer will be contacted to confirm your eligibility and the pattern/hours of care required as part of assessing your eligibility.

Can I still apply for Key Worker pre-school childcare?

- Pre-school childcare applications will continue in line with existing online application form found here: www.cardiff.gov.uk/keyworkerchildcare
- Parents and carers will be required to confirm work hours and working patterns, so that a place can be offered. It is important that you only apply for childcare that you need as the funding to cover costs is being provided through the repurposing of an existing grants.

I am a critical key worker, can I still access the Coronavirus – Childcare Assistance Scheme (C-CAS) for my pre-school child/children?

- Yes, Key Worker parents will be able to continue to access C-CAS to cover all childcare costs until 31st August. There will be a further review in August and C-CAS will only completely close at a time when the response to the virus has moved to a point where we do not need to sustain provision for critical workers.

- Applications for new C-CAS applicants may close in mid-July so if you haven't yet applied and believe you may be eligible for C-CAS please go [here](#).

Can I use my nearest or preferred registered childcare setting for critical key worker childcare?

- Unfortunately, many registered childcare providers remain closed. There are limited places remaining in the current C-CAS approved Childcare Settings, so if you access this provision you may not be in a setting nearest to your home.

Registered Childcare settings

When will my registered childcare provider reopen?

- The Welsh Government has confirmed that they are aiming to enable childcare settings to increase their operations from 29 June, providing they can comply with protective measures set out in their operational guidance for childcare settings,

Further information can be found here:

<https://gov.wales/protecting-staff-and-under-5-year-olds-coronavirus-childcare>

A further announcement is expected on June 19.

Nurseries and childcare settings will be working through guidance to establish if and when they will be reopening.

For parents wishing to access childcare again, you will need to contact your registered childcare provider for an update on their current plans.

Childcare Offer for Wales

The Childcare Offer for Wales will continue payments for those children who were eligible and accessing childcare under the Offer before the end of March.

Unfortunately, Welsh Government have only committed to continue Childcare Offer funding for children regularly attending open settings. If your setting remains closed you will need to continue caring for your child at home.

What if I was not receiving Childcare Offer funding before the end of March 2020?

- Welsh Government has suspended new applications to the Childcare Offer until September 2020.

This means that children born between 1st January 2017 and 31st March 2017 will be unable to access funding until at least September and parents not currently able to access funding will be responsible for paying any fees charged by their childcare provider.

For updated information about the Childcare Offer for Wales please visit:

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-childcare-offer-and-coronavirus-childcare-assistance-scheme>

