

*Please ask for:*

*Direct Line:*

*E-Mail:*

*Our Ref:*

*Your Ref:*

*Date:*

1 September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

As we embark on a new academic year, I wanted to write to you all to confirm the arrangements for pupils across all our schools and settings. Since 7 August 2021, Wales has been at Alert Level Zero. As a result, the current policy allows contacts of confirmed cases of COVID-19 to be exempt from isolation if they are asymptomatic and double vaccinated (at least 14 days ago) or under the age of 18. Those who have symptoms/test positive MUST continue to isolate immediately.

We are now working with all our schools and settings to:

- enable education to operate as 'business as usual' as far as possible
- secure the best outcomes for all learners by considering both their educational needs and wellbeing
- manage the ongoing risks of COVID-19 as safely as possible as for other infections, and ensure clarity of actions required if there is a case in a school or college

To support us with this, the Welsh Government has now published local COVID-19 Infection Control Decision Frameworks for schools and colleges. This will help schools to tailor their arrangements to reflect local risks and circumstances.

When pupils return arrangements will largely be the same as they were before the summer holidays but the following changes, as recommended by the Welsh Government, will be implemented across our schools as soon as possible and at the latest by 20 September. Your school will let you know of the changes:

- There will not be a requirement for face masks to be worn by pupils in schools, but they are required to be worn on school transport for secondary aged pupils
- There will be no requirement for contact bubbles in schools
- There will be no need for staggered start and finish times
- The additional cleaning of high contact areas will continue until Christmas

Throughout the pandemic all our schools have worked exceptionally hard to make their premises as safe as possible in very difficult and changing circumstances. At present Swansea has the highest rate of positive cases compared to anywhere else in Wales which shows Covid has not gone away.

We all need to play our part in helping schools to remain safe and minimise disruption. Fresh air is important in the fight against the virus, so if you are out socialising, please consider meeting outdoors if you can.

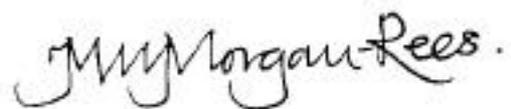
Please continue to encourage your children to wash their hands regularly and remember that even though the rules have relaxed, they still have a personal choice to wear a face-covering if they want to.

Vaccination is extremely important and drop-in vaccination sessions are running regularly in Swansea Bay for anyone over the age of 16.

As always, we will continue to work with our schools to ensure that you and your children get the support that you need as we return to school.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helen Morgan-Rees". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Helen Morgan-Rees  
Director of Education