

Dear colleague

I am now in a position to provide you with more information regarding expectations of schools.

Earlier this week, Welsh Government took the decision that schools in Wales should close for children and young people with the exception of making provision for children who are vulnerable, or whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response, so that they can continue to work, where alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made.

It is clear that this advice was based on the scientific advice on how to limit the spread of COVID -19 and therefore it is imperative that as far as possible social contact is minimised.

The advice to parents should be that **if children can stay safely in their home , they should, to limit the chance of a virus spreading.** Parents need to keep their children at home, wherever possible and schools and childcare and play settings should be open only for those children who absolutely need to attend. This equally applies to all children including those of key workers and vulnerable children.

This means that schools should continue to provide care for as small a number of children as possible - children who are vulnerable and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

For childcare and play settings including Flying Start and Early Entitlement, this also means restricting access to the children of key workers or vulnerable children.

The key workers list is similar to that issued by the UK government as follows:

Health and social care - this includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare - this includes nursery and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.

Key public services - this includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and national government - this only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response or delivering essential public services such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies.

Food and other necessary goods - this includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).

Public safety and national security - this includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport - this includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services - this includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.

Schools and setting based staff unless ill or self-isolating are expected to be available for work. It is the decision of the headteacher to direct the work programme and to direct the pace of work. I would emphasise that it may be necessary if there is surplus staffing capacity to ask staff to work at different locations across the Borough.

You may want to consider using the following to parents as a message from me and to put up on your websites. I will arrange something similar to go on our website

Dear Parent / Carer,

Earlier this week Welsh Government took the decision that schools in Wales should close for children and young people with the exception of making provision for children who are vulnerable, or whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response, so that they can continue to work, where alternative childcare arrangements cannot be made.

There has been significant discussion over the last 24 hours over the way schools will open from Monday onwards and I thank you all for your patience and understanding during these difficult times.

Could I firstly emphasise that the purpose of closing schools is to restrict and minimise social contact and therefore reduce the risk of being infected by the coronavirus.

It is essential you keep your children at home wherever possible in order to limit the chance of a virus spreading.

In accordance with the above we will be limiting attendance at our schools for parents who are at the forefront of the national effort to fight the coronavirus disease as per the Governments key worker list to those who are employed within;

Health and social care - this includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

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However, there is a need to be clear that, **we want to prioritise attendance at school to only those who absolutely need to be there and are eligible to be there according to this criteria.** If you fall outside this criteria, schools will not be expected to receive your children. Please be considerate and understanding in these very challenging times.

Our schools will also be open to our most vulnerable learners who will be identified in discussion with headteachers and Social Services and your school will contact you personally on this.

We are confident that if this advice is followed, we will all make a significant contribution towards protecting our pupils and our staff.

We will review these arrangements very carefully with our schools on a daily basis and will keep you appraised of any changes through the usual communication and media channels.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Roberts

Chief Officer; Education and Early Intervention

Wrexham County Borough Council

