



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22**

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**8<sup>TH</sup> of DECEMBER 2021**

**AUTUMN TERM UPDATE IN RELATION TO EDUCATION'S LATEST POSITION IN  
RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee with some contextual information on the most recent changes in Education during the autumn term in response to the changing COVID-19 position.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Consider the verbal update from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services on the Council's most recent responses to Ministerial and Welsh Government announcements in relation to the COVID-19 situation.
- 2.2 Consider whether they wish the Director of Education and Inclusion Services to report on further information in any future meetings.

**3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To provide Members with an update on the actions taken by the Council as a result of announcements made by the First Minister and the Minister for Education and Welsh Language and the associated amended Welsh Government guidance and framework for schools issued in readiness for the return to school in September and for implementation thereafter.
- 3.2 To update Members of the current COVID-19 processes and practices in Rhondda Cynon Taf schools and to ensure that they are kept abreast of all developments.

## **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2021, the Minister for Education and Welsh Language wrote to all headteachers advising how schools could continue to operate safely when they return in September.
- 4.2 Three main changes were proposed to bring some normality back to education ahead of the new autumn term, namely:
- Face coverings no longer being routinely recommended in classrooms.
  - Contact groups no longer being required for school pupils. (The TTP system being used to identify close contacts of learners who have tested positive.)
  - Normal session times to resume.
- 4.3 Welsh Government's Framework 'The Local COVID-19 Infection Control Decision Framework' was published at the start of the autumn term. The framework is to enable schools to tailor some of the interventions to reflect the level of risk identified locally. Schools continue to be supported by public health officials and the local authority to ensure measures are appropriate to their circumstances.
- 4.4 The approach set out in Welsh Government's Framework document is based on schools operating as normally as possible following the Welsh Government's move to alert level zero on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2021 but in doing so, schools are also to consider and balance the harms for learners, ensuring that decisions on school operations take account of learners' individual overall wellbeing as well as public health measures.
- 4.5 There is still a need to do everything reasonably practicable to ensure health, safety and welfare of individuals, hence, baseline measures including risk assessments, hygiene, ventilation and preventing attendance by individuals with COVID symptoms continue to be in place, as set out in the framework; but many of the more severe measures can be relaxed as part of a proportionate system of controls. For schools, this allows some flexibility for local decision-making and tailored interventions, supported by local authorities, Incident Management Teams (IMTs) and public health.
- 4.6 The vaccination offer initially made to 16 and 17 year olds has been extended and all 12 to 15 year olds have been offered an initial dose of the Pfizer vaccine. Welsh Government further announced (on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November) that all 16 and 17 year olds are to be offered a second dose of the vaccine – this followed a recommendation of the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

## **5. EDUCATIONAL PROVISION**

The local authority continues to work very closely with all our schools and provides advice and guidance to school staff as well as regular updates to parents/carers (see section 6 below).

Operational guidance continues to be provided in relation to the safe operation of schools and this is regularly updated to reflect the latest advice and announcements from Welsh Government.

### 5.1 **Remote learning**

Remote learning allows pupils to continue accessing the curriculum beyond the classroom.

Although all learners have returned to school settings, remote learning is still made available to learners who need to self-isolate due to COVID-19.

### 5.2 **Digitally Excluded Learners (DELs)**

From the start of the pandemic, digitally excluded learners who did not have access to an appropriate internet-connected device and/or internet connection have been supported with ICT equipment and Mifi devices to enable learners to access education from home. A total of 5,429 devices have been provided for digitally excluded learners and a further 4,456 chrome books allocated to schools based on efsm data.

DELs who returned to their school in September 2021 kept their devices for use at home for on-line learning so that support could continue to be provided. Devices allocated to school leavers were recalled by schools at the end of learners' academic studies in the summer term.

### 5.3 **Business Continuity Plans**

All schools have Business Continuity Plans in place that detail the school-based actions that will be taken to mitigate risks and to ensure that it is possible to ensure continuity in delivering education safely. These have been shared with the local authority and are reviewed by officers. Schools are requested to revisit, update and submit their Business Continuity Plans to the local authority on a regular basis.

Business continuity planning is critical to ensuring that schools are able to quickly respond to any challenges and are able to maintain effective delivery of education to all learners throughout various stages of the impact of the pandemic at school, local and national level.

### 5.4 **Health and Safety**

All schools have undertaken a COVID-19 specific Health and Safety Risk Assessment in consultation with their governing bodies and staff. Education and Inclusion Services have provided schools with comprehensive and regularly updated guidance documentation (*Operational Guidance for Schools*) which contains template documentation to assist schools in writing their risk assessments which schools must revisit, update and submit to the local authority on a regular basis for review by Health and Safety Officers who also offer assistance and guidance, as requested. The most recent risk assessments were submitted to the local authority in September 2021.

Ventilation is one of the key health and safety/preventative measures that schools should continue to be implementing. Welsh Government are in the process of delivering carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) monitors to local authorities which have been distributed to schools to assist with identifying areas where there may be challenges in ensuring adequate ventilation. CO<sub>2</sub> monitors will notify staff when CO<sub>2</sub> levels rise, so they can identify where ventilation needs to be improved and take appropriate action/seek appropriate advice.

Another measure that has been introduced within the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Health Board area is the recommendation that staff and secondary aged learners wear face coverings within the school (communal and classroom areas) – this follows discussions with Public Health Wales in light of concerns that the level of transmission is the highest in the 10-19 age range.

## 5.5 Managing Confirmed Cases

The number of cases of COVID-19 in our schools increased considerably over the first part of the autumn term reducing through the half term break period with a gradual increase since the return to school. The total number of pupils marked with a positive test absence of at least one session through the term to the 25<sup>th</sup> of November is 6,187 across 115 schools.

Schools continue to work very closely with the Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) Service in identifying close contacts of confirmed cases, thereby enabling those contacts to take the necessary measures to prevent the spread of the virus. Schools inform TTP of a confirmed case by completing a PCR Positive Notification Form for children and staff.

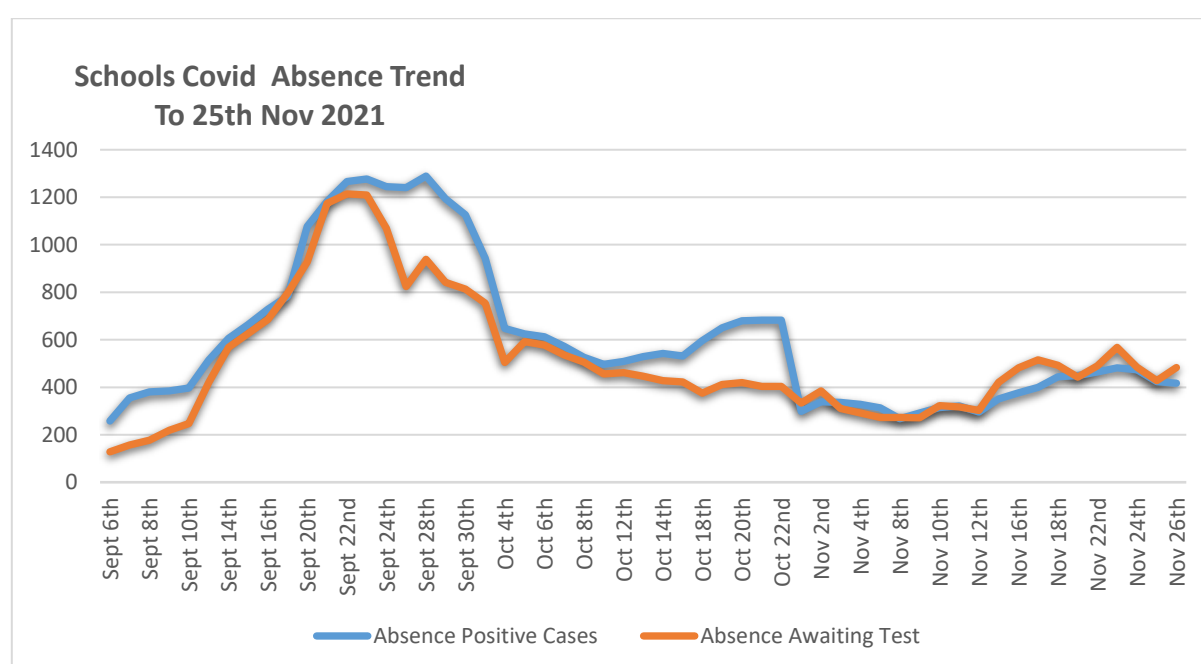
Contact tracers aim to get in touch with the positive case and their identified close contacts and offer them PCR testing on day 2 (or as soon as possible once identified as a contact) and day 8. Per Welsh Government's announcement on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, learners aged 5-17 and fully vaccinated adults who have a household member who has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 should not attend school until they themselves receive a negative PCR test result.

The local authority has shared Welsh Government template letters for schools to issue to parents/carers as part of this process:-

- As schools are usually aware of a positive case before TTP, an 'inform letter' for potential close contacts may be sent (at the school's discretion), to parents/carers of learners who to the best of the school's knowledge are potential close contacts of the positive case – this letter advises parents/carers to look out for symptoms of COVID-19; get tested if symptoms develop; limit contact with individuals at increased risk from COVID-19 for a 10-day period.
- If a learner is a confirmed close contact of a positive case, the school can send a 'warn and inform' letter to parents/carers advising them to get a PCR test for their child; be alert for symptoms of COVID-19; avoid contact with individuals at increased risk from COVID-19; wash hands regularly and limit contact with large groups of people as much as possible outside of school.

Bespoke arrangements were developed locally to address some of the pressures experienced in the area, including the development of an ‘inform letter’ which could be sent to families at schools’ discretion in response to a confirmed case, and the generic use of face coverings in secondary schools despite the ‘moderate’ local risk level. These measures were adopted to mitigate risks against a backdrop of increasing numbers of confirmed cases in schools, but within the context of moderate risks across Cwm Taf Morgannwg.

The learner data detailed below suggests that there was a peak in learner absence due to positive PCR test results and absence due to learners awaiting test results between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> week of September 2021, but more recent datasets show reduced numbers following the return to school after the October half term break. More recent gradual increases are attributed to a small number of schools with relatively high positive case numbers.



It should be noted that where there have been high case rates, this has resulted in staffing challenges in schools due to confirmed cases, self-isolation requirements and childcare issues for staff with children. It should also be noted that other absences have made staffing very challenging during the autumn term.

At alert level zero:-

- Contacts under the age of 18 do not have to self-isolate unless they themselves start to show symptoms of COVID-19.
- Those who are fully vaccinated (with a period of 14 days having passed since the full vaccination course was completed) do not have to self-isolate unless they themselves start to show symptoms of COVID-19.

However, per Welsh Government’s announcement on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, learners aged 5 to 17 and fully vaccinated adults who have a household member who

has symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 should not attend school until they themselves receive a negative PCR test result.

Adult close contacts (household or otherwise) who are not fully vaccinated still need to self-isolate.

## **5.6 Testing**

### **5.6.1 Under 5's**

From the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, Welsh Government introduced changes to the recommendations around the testing of children under 5 years of age. Where children under 5 have been identified as a close contact, Welsh Government no longer routinely recommend COVID-19 tests unless directed to do so by a doctor, or if parents believe a test is absolutely necessary and in the best interests of the child. If a child under 5 develops symptoms they should not attend school or childcare. They should only return to school or childcare when their symptoms have resolved or when they are well enough to do so.

Children under 5 often find the testing process invasive and distressing and this can make getting a sample very difficult and distressing for parents and carers. Additionally, children under 5 do not spread COVID in the same way as an adult or in the same way that people consider young children to spread cold and flu. Young children have small bodies, small lungs and small breath capacity which means even if they are infected with the virus, they cannot spread it to others in the same way as an older young person or adult would.

### **5.6.2 Close contact - working with children/young people at higher clinical risk**

While the vast majority of children in special schools are no longer considered vulnerable to COVID-19 it is recognised there is a much higher proportion of children and young people with clinical risks. Fully vaccinated staff working in special educational provision who are identified as a contact (household or otherwise), can undertake return to work testing. This involves the undertaking of a specific testing regime consisting of one PCR test prior to attending work (the result of which must be negative) followed by daily lateral flow tests until 10 days has passed since the individual was informed of their contact with the confirmed case or 10 days from when a household member was confirmed positive.

This has been introduced to provide an additional level of safeguarding to individuals who have higher clinical risks. If the staff member does not agree to the scheme of testing, they can either be redeployed to a role where they are not facing individuals who have higher clinical risks or instructed not to attend work.

### **5.6.3 Lateral Flow Testing (LFT)**

Welsh Government continue to provide all schools and childcare/play settings with Lateral Flow Tests. This twice weekly self-administered testing is undertaken at home and can help to identify positive asymptomatic cases regularly and quickly and that requires individuals to self-isolate before coming into schools and childcare/play

settings. Test kits are made available to all school/childcare staff and learners in Year 7 and above (subject to written consent having been provided).

All staff and learners in Year 7 and above were encouraged to continue the twice weekly lateral flow testing over the October half-term break and to undertake a lateral flow test on the morning of their return to school after the half-term break. They are being similarly encouraged to undertake two lateral flow tests (3 to 4 days apart) prior to returning to school after the Christmas break.

Individuals testing positive on a lateral flow test should self-isolate and get a PCR test within 24 hours. If the PCR test is negative, they can return to school. If the PCR test is positive, they will need to continue to self-isolate for the full 10-day period.

Schools and childcare/play settings are aware that testing is to supplement other preventative measures and that measures such as ensuring adequate ventilation, hand washing, cleaning, etc. must all still be implemented.

Local Health Boards also continue to make COVID-19 PCR testing available to people with a wider range of symptoms such as fatigue, muscle ache or pain, a sore throat, a headache, a runny nose, nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea. Individuals with these wider symptoms are also asked to consider taking a PCR test and self-isolate while they await the result.

## 5.7 Attendance

Following consultation, the Welsh Government has revoked the School Performance and Absence Targets (Wales) Regulations 2011 (in force from the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2020). As a result, schools are not required to set targets for future years or report on those previously set for 2019/20 onwards. However, the annual attendance data collections will continue.

Due to Welsh Government deciding not to reinstate Fixed Penalty Notices/Prosecutions, the Attendance and Wellbeing Service (AWS) continued to operate Wellbeing Response Visits into the autumn term. The AWS liaise with schools on a three-day rota and schools advise of pupils who have unauthorised absences from school and request a Wellbeing Response Visit which aims to discover the reason for the absence and provide any support/assurances as required to reintegrate pupils back into school. Last academic year, this resulted in over 10,000 wellbeing visits to homes.

The start of the 2021/22 academic year has seen significant challenges in terms of attendance. Changes in isolation guidance has had an impact on attendance rates in our schools. Where TTP processes have changed and known contacts under 18 no longer need to isolate, this has resulted in anxiety within our school communities and pupils not attending when community transmission rates are high or there is a confirmed case within a learner's class. The return of household isolation has also resulted in learners missing out on elements of their education. Weekly attendance checks take place by AWS and the continuation of Wellbeing Response Visits are aimed at returning learners to school quickly and effectively.

This brought the average attendance for Autumn Term 1 to 90.4% at primary phase and 85.4% at secondary phase. We have seen slight increases since the return of school in Autumn Term 2 but will continue weekly monitoring and support for schools to ensure this pattern remains.

Support centrally is aimed at early intervention where absences are identified by schools and we have relaxed the AWS referral threshold for Autumn 2 to tackle the more entrenched absentees. We have reduced the number of WRVs on our rota, in order for staff to work with pupils below 40% attendance as open cases and are holding meetings with schools currently to discuss these pupils.

In addition to the support provided by AWS to tackle non-attendance, there is currently a secondary phase pilot for Family Engagement Officers in six schools which has entered its second year and a pilot for thirteen primary schools which has begun this academic year. The focus of both is to support family engagement and improvement in school attendance in some of our most deprived communities. This has been possible via funding provided by Cabinet and the extension to primary schools is based on the early successes shown in the secondary pilot. The latest consideration of this project showcasing these early successes and rationale for extension can be found here: [Consideration for FEO Roles - June 2021](#)

## 5.8 Partnership Working

Education and Inclusion Services work closely and meet regularly with Welsh Government, Central South Consortium and many departments within the local authority (in particular, Public Health and Protection; Children's Services; School Transport; HR) as well as many other partners, to share up to date information and facilitate opportunities for discussion, questions and problem solving. The senior management team of Education and Inclusion Services meet regularly with headteachers and trade union representatives, and a meeting with chairs of governing bodies is held termly, with the last meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2021.

## 5.9 Free School Meal Provision

The Council has seen a significant growth in the percentage of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM). The data is summarised as follows:

Month	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20
eFSM	8367	8619	8698	8764	8960	9051	9089	9089
Total	38561	39004	38997	38991	38989	38985	38832	38832
%	21.70%	22.10%	22.30%	22.48%	22.98%	23.22%	23.41%	23.41%

Month	Sep-20	Oct-20	Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21
eFSM	9284	9328	9439	9546	9513	9689	9816	9953
Total	36771	38755	38757	38806	38750	39231	39211	39325
%	23.71%	24.07%	24.35%	24.60%	24.55%	24.70%	25.03%	25.31%



Month	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21
eFSM	10028	10121	10123	9995	9946	9901
Total	39293	39331	39,333	39,175	38,567	38,596
%	25.52%	25.73%	25.74%	25.51%	25.79%	25.65%

Free school meals are provided at school on days that an eligible learner attends the school setting. Where an eligible free school meals learner is unable to attend school due to them needing to self-isolate due to COVID-19, BACS payments of £3.90 per day are made to their parent/carer.

The Welsh Government also continues to provide funding (at a rate of £19.50 per eligible learner per week) to make free school meal provision available during school holidays throughout the 2021 to 2022 financial year.

#### 5.10 **Breakfast Club Provision**

Schools operated breakfast club provision with reduced capacity during the summer term to ensure that social distancing, effective hygiene and other preventative measures could be maintained.

Following the move to alert level zero on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 2021 and Welsh Government's associated relaxation of some of the more stringent measures that had been in place in the summer term, breakfast club provision operated as normal from September 2021 with numbers being accommodated in accordance with pre-pandemic capacities. Schools keep a record of any children attending breakfast club provision to support contact tracing processes if needed.

Should any change in the local level of risk occur, any associated change will be communicated to schools/parents/carers immediately.

#### 5.11 **Childcare Settings**

During the summer and early autumn, we have seen an increase in the number of positive notifications reported to the Council. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> of June and the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, 21 positive PCR tests were reported, amongst both children and staff. Twelve of these resulted in a full or partial closure of the setting whilst fourteen only required the individual to isolate. Since the move to alert level zero on the 7<sup>th</sup> of August and the associated relaxation of many of the more stringent controls, there has been a significant increase in notifications. 107 cases have been reported to the Council since that date. However, only 29 of these have resulted in full or partial closures of the settings - 13 of these were childminders. The other cases only required the individual to isolate. It is important to note that this may not be the true number of positive cases in childcare settings, as they are only obliged to report cases to TTP - settings are not obliged to report positive cases to the Childcare Team within the Council. The Childcare Team ask settings to inform them of positive cases so that support and guidance can be offered if required.

Whilst the changes in regulations have led to less closures of settings, the sector has expressed concern about possible close contacts continuing to attend their settings and the possibility of infection spreading. The cessation of testing of under 5's has

also led to concern amongst the sector of how they can manage infections and protect vulnerable children and staff.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) data suggests that just under 6% of settings remain closed in RCT. This may not be entirely accurate as some settings may have reopened and not informed CIW. Local knowledge suggests that it is mainly out of school clubs that remain closed, due to venue restrictions or staffing issues.

Although the childcare sector has adapted well to introducing protective measures to keep staff and children safe, the relaxation of restrictions and the changes in Welsh Government advice has made it difficult for them to keep their settings as secure as before. A drop in numbers attending also continues to impact on the financial sustainability of the sector. Additional Welsh Government funding has enabled the Council to reintroduce a COVID support grant for settings to support them with closures, increased costs and financial hardship.

## 5.12 Examinations

Qualifications Wales wrote to all headteachers and learners on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 advising that:

- The November series for GCSEs in English Language, Mathematics, Mathematics-Numeracy and Welsh Language would go ahead and that the adapted assessment requirements put in place by the WJEC would apply to this exam series. The adaptations will also apply to GCSE units available in January 2022 (English Literature and Welsh Literature) and to Skills Challenge Certificate components submitted in January 2022.
- In summer 2022 GCSEs, AS and A level qualifications will be assessed via examinations and, where applicable, non-examination assessment (NEA).
- In recognition of the disruption to teaching and learning for learners sitting GCSEs, AS and A levels and the Skills Challenge Certificate Qualifications in summer 2022, the assessment requirements have been adapted. These adaptations have been put in place for summer 2022 to support learners and make the exams fairer for them. WJEC will award grades to learners in summer 2022 and to enable the grading process to be as fair as possible to learners and reflect the disruption to teaching and learning that they have experienced, 2022 will be treated as a transition year to reflect that we are in a pandemic recovery period and learners' education has been disrupted. In 2022 the intention is for results to reflect broadly a midway point between 2021 and 2019. In 2023 Qualifications Wales will aim to return to results that are in line with those in pre-pandemic years.

If the exam series is cancelled, a contingency approach will be needed and this is planned to be based on the Centre Determined Grade (CDG) approach from summer 2021; however, the expectation for 2022 would be that schools use assessments that they already have planned as part of their teaching and learning programmes (avoiding over assessment and reducing reliance upon whole past papers).

## 6. SUPPORTING PAPERS AND INFORMATION

6.1 As general information for the Committee, the following table reflects the key guidance documents and information sent to stakeholders since July 2021:

Document	Date of issue/ circulation
<b>Attendance Guidance</b>	
Attendance and Wellbeing Operations - Autumn Half Term (1)	03/09/21
<b>Schools – correspondence/information</b>	
Update regarding release of Welsh Government Framework for September	26/08/21
Notification of publication of Welsh Government Framework for September	27/08/21
Breakfast Club operations resuming ‘as normal’ from September	01/09/21
Welsh Government information - Letter for primary school parents re: contact tracing process; warn and inform letter for close contacts; Quality assurance regarding LFTs for secondary schools	03/09/21
Welsh Government announcement regarding vaccination of 12-15 year olds	14/09/21
Letters relating to notice of liability regarding purported vaccine promotion	16/09/21
Information for staff regarding PCR testing arrangements	21/09/21
Vaccination 12-15 year olds; LFT ordering information	24/09/21
Minister for Education and Welsh Language - autumn term letter to schools	28/09/21
PCR positive notification form	28/09/21
Welsh Government’s School Intervention Framework – update	29/09/21

Document	Date of issue/ circulation
Vaccine misinformation - letter from Welsh Government	01/10/21
CO <sub>2</sub> Monitor Update from WLGA	04/10/21
Reintroduction of face coverings in secondary schools in Cwm Taf Morgannwg - PLUS - RCT Public Health escalation information	04/10/21
Special school - testing for staff and learners - updates from WLGA	06/10/21
CO <sub>2</sub> Monitor Update from WLGA - delay to deliveries	08/10/21
Welsh Government information - inform letters; FAQs; WG assets regarding recent changes in relation to testing, etc.	11/10/21
CO <sub>2</sub> Monitor – guidance for use	13/10/21
Updates – under 5's testing; contact tracing; positive LFT results	15/10/21
Continuation of face coverings in secondary schools in Cwm Taf Morgannwg	27/10/21
Welsh Government FAQs and link to WG Toolkit for Schools	05/11/21
CO <sub>2</sub> monitors – information regarding reading levels – Council Departments to contact	09/11/21
School based costs – Hardship Fund claims update	09/11/21
Vaccination – second dose for 16- and 17-year-olds	15/11/21
Responses to questions – special school staff – close contacts	22/11/21
<b>Lateral Flow Testing – September 2021</b>	
Requirement for LFTs before returning to school and once returned	01/09/21
LFT update – testing to continue	20/09/21
Updates – under 5s testing/contact tracing/LFT positive tests	15/10/21
	20/10/21

Document	Date of issue/ circulation
Updates – LFT positive tests/face coverings continuation secondary schools/graphics – symptomatic individuals not to attend school/LFTs over half-term break	
LFT instructions for use from Welsh Government – Welsh language version	20/10/21
Reminder of where to order LFTs / Request to LFT prior to return to school in January 2022	26/11/21
<p><b>Frequently Asked Questions (for parents/carers)</b>            Covering a number of issues including – school safety measures; cleaning; transport; catering and free school meals; confirmed cases of COVID-19. These FAQs are published on the Council’s website and updated regularly – <a href="http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolreturnfaqs">www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolreturnfaqs</a></p>	
FAQs for parents/carers – versions 14a, 15, 16, 17, 18	16/07/21 – 17/11/21
<p><b>Parents/carers – social media – autumn term</b>            The below videos/captions were published several times via the Council’s social media channels (Facebook and Twitter)</p>	
<p>Updated social media graphics regarding: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Return to school in September - reminders:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Wearing face coverings on transport</li> <li>o Autumn term FAQs</li> <li>o Reminder to test/not attend school with symptoms/undertake hand and respiratory hygiene</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Reintroduction of face coverings in secondary schools in Cwm Taf Morgannwg</li> <li>- Secondary school learners and all staff to undertake LFTs over October half-term and immediately prior to returning to school</li> </ul>	<p>From end of Aug 2021</p> <p>From 04/10/21</p> <p>From 19/10/21</p>
<p><b>‘Operational Guidance for Schools – September 2021’</b>            Updated guidance document issued to headteachers to reflect the publication of Welsh Government’s Framework. Document is regularly updated to reflect changes in the local and national position and to reflect updated guidance from the Welsh Government. Guidance document includes template risk assessments and template letters for parents/carers.</p>	

Document	Date of issue/ circulation
- Version 1	01/09/21
- Version 1b	09/09/21
- Version 1c	10/09/21
- Version 1d	17/09/21
- Version 2	22/09/21
- Version 2b	11/10/21
- Version 2c	15/10/21
- Version 2d	17/11/21

## **7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not currently required - the contents of the report are for information purposes only.

## **8. CONSULTATION**

8.1 There is no requirement to undertake any consultation. The Director of Education and Inclusion Services provides regular and detailed COVID-19 updates to Scrutiny Committee meetings.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)**

9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

## **10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED**

10.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **11. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP**

11.1 This is an information report presenting the Cabinet report which outlines how the Council is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

12.1 Whilst it is proposed that Scrutiny is presented with regular updates on the Education Directorate's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation relating to schools and education is often very fluid and fast-moving. In view of this, a termly update will be provided to encapsulate all the key changes and the wide-ranging documentation sent to schools to ensure that they are kept abreast of national and local changes.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**8TH of DECEMBER 2021**

**AUTUMN TERM UPDATE IN RELATION TO EDUCATION'S LATEST POSITION IN  
RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

**Officer to contact:**

Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services