



Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre
Caerphilly Road
Ystrad Mynach
Hengoed
CF82 7XW

School No: 01443 866000

January 11th 2021

“Stay at Home - Protect the NHS - Save Lives.”

Dear Parents/Carers,

You will all know the spread of Coronavirus and particularly the new strain of the virus across our communities has become increasingly concerning over the past week. The rapid spread of the new strain is having significant impact upon a wide range of services not least our NHS.

The First Minister, Mark Drakeford announced in his briefing on Friday (8/1/21) that the lockdown in Wales is being extended for another 3 weeks. He also stated that schools will stay closed and are likely to remain closed until at least February half term. Mark Drakeford further stated, **“To slow the spread of the virus we all must stay at home to protect the NHS and save lives”**.

The situation in special schools across Wales is slightly different. Kirsty Williams (Education Minister) has stated that special schools should be open, “where possible”. I wanted to explain to you what this means for pupils and for you as parents/carers. “Being open, where possible” does not mean that we will be able to operate full daily provision to all 182 pupils across the main school site and at our satellite classes.

In line with the latest evidence, we are very much aware that the more people (pupils and staff) in the building the easier it is to transmit the virus. Evidence to the Welsh Government (**TAG report, 7th January 2021**) states that the new strain is more transmissible than the current strain. We are in the process of reviewing our risk assessment with our school and local authority H&S officers to ensure our plans keep everyone as safe as possible. Please be patient with us while we undertake this work.

You will have also heard both Mark Drakeford and Kirsty Williams state that staff who support pupils’ with their personal care routines in special schools will be prioritised for vaccination. We are hoping that Welsh Government will give us more details around their vaccination plans for staff later this week. We are also hoping to pilot lateral flow testing for staff (and possibly some pupils); both of these measures will help to reduce risks; however, it would be quite wrong of me to give you the impression that we can remove all risks associated with COVID 19 as the situation is changing on a daily basis.

Schools like Trinity Fields across Wales are working together so that there are common approaches. We are all very clear that wherever possible children are safest at home; this said we will continue to do our very best to provide some face-to-face learning for our most vulnerable pupils and for those who have parents/carers who are “critical workers”.



Where pupils can remain safe at home, class teams will continue to provide a range of learning activities that might include: live learning, work packs delivered to your home, activities posted via Seesaw etc. We have already some amazing examples of home schooling sent to class teams- you should be rightly proud of all that you have achieved with your child since the start of the pandemic. If you would like further details on how best to support your child at home then please get in touch with your child's class team.

Please remember if your child is due to attend a face-to-face session at school, they MUST NOT attend if they if:

- They are ill, particularly with a high temperature, cough or loss of taste or smell.
- If anyone in your household is ill.
- If anyone in your household is waiting for a COVID test result.
- If you have been in recent contact with anyone with COVID 19.

I appreciate how difficult and gloomy things appear at the moment. We all want to return to life as we once knew it. Accessing vaccination, together with regular testing and following Government rules will help us to get through the coming weeks.

It is important that we remember: **Hands – Face – Space** bearing in mind that approximately 1 in 3 people who have coronavirus have **NO** symptoms and could be spreading it without realising it. **Please remember: 'Hands - Face - Space.'**

- **Hands**– wash your hands regularly and for at least 20 seconds.
- **Face**– wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- **Space**– stay at least 2 metres apart from people you do not live with where possible.

Many thanks for your continued support and patience at this very challenging time. Please take care and stay safe.

Yours sincerely,

I. Elliott

Ian Elliott MBE
Headteacher

Learning together in a changing world, creating success for all

Developing all pupils as ambitious, enterprising, ethical and healthy learners.

