

Return to School Guiding Principles

June 2020

Content:

- Background (p.2)
- Newport Local Authority Approach (p.2)
- Guiding Principles (p.3)
- Childcare Hubs (p.4)
- Vulnerable Groups & Learning Resource Bases (LRBs) (p.4)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (p.7)
- Transport (p.9)
- Education Workforce (p.10)
- Premises Management (p.13)
- Catering (p.13)
- Central Education Services Support (p.13)
- Pupil Attendance (p.14)
- Supporting Digitally Excluded Learners (p.14)
- Distance Learning (p.15)
- Early Years Childcare (p.17)
- School Cleaning (p.17)
- School Maintenance (p.18)

1. Background

On Wednesday 3rd June 2020, the Welsh Minister for Education, Kirsty Williams MS, outlined the national approach for the return of children and young people to schools in Wales. The approach involves schools in Wales reopening on June 29th 2020. Welsh Government advocates a phased return to schools, supporting pupils to check in and catch-up with a focus on wellbeing, whilst also continuing with distance and online learning in and around school-based sessions. The reopening requires a clear focus on safety in accordance with social distancing legislation and associated Public Health Wales guidance. The aim is for schools to be open to pupils from all year groups for limited periods during the week, with only a third of pupils in school at any one time.

Attendance is voluntary based upon parental preference in line with current legislation and guidance. Children and young people who fall into the shielding category will carry on with online learning. School hub childcare is expected to continue, whilst taking account of demand and deliverability. Welsh Government Guidance was issued exactly one week after the announcement on Wednesday 10th June 2020. There are two types of guidance operational and learning, which can be accessed via the following links:

- Operational guidance:
<https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-keep-education-safe-covid-19>
- Learners guidance
<https://gov.wales/guidance-learning-over-summer-term-keep-education-safe>

2. Newport Local Authority Approach

In order to prepare for the reopening of schools in Newport, Education Services has established an Executive School Planning Group. The aim of this group is to develop a common framework and set of principles which are reflective of national guidance and local context in order to reopen schools safely without unnecessary duplication of work for school leaders. The group is chaired by the Chief Education Officer and includes:

- The Chair of CONSHE (Conference of Newport Secondary Heads)
- The Chair of NAPHS (Newport Association of Primary Heads)
- Two additional secondary head teachers
- Two additional primary head teachers
- Deputy Chief Education Officer
- Head of Engagement and Learning
- Head of ALN and Inclusion
- Service Manager for Resources and Planning
- Health & Safety Manager for NCC
- Senior HR Business Partner for Education.

A series of sub groups operate outside of this group to progress specific actions. These include sub groups for:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Support for Special Schools and Learning Resource Bases
- Transport
- Premises Management
- Human Resources / Workforce.
- Digital and IT

The following guiding principles should be followed to strategically align the safe and successful re-opening of Newport schools.

3. Guiding Principles

1. All planning will be focussed around keeping learners and staff safe.
2. Schools will design re-opening plans based around their capacity for cleaning, staffing and space. Re-opening plans should support 'up to one third of pupils', although it is recognised that this may not be possible in every school.
3. Where possible, the local authority promotes consistency of approach in the 'offer' to pupils returning to school. It is expected that pupils of statutory school age will engage in a weekly catch up experience over the summer term or three separate check in's.
4. Schools should not operate a separate morning and afternoon slot for pupils unless it has the capacity to clean to a satisfactory standard during a pupil changeover.
5. Schools may choose their own approach to non-statutory schooling. However there is an expectation that all pupils from Nursery and Sixth Form will have the opportunity to check in with a member of staff and see their school layout.
6. Schools need to make in school provision available for vulnerable children. Vulnerable children may require more frequent time in a school. This should be determined through a vulnerable pupil risk assessment.
7. All pupils currently in one of the thirty-six Newport Childcare Hubs will return to their 'home school' by June 29th. As advised by Welsh Government, children should remain in separate bubble classes.
8. Childcare applications will continue to be approved by each school. It is recognised that a surge in applications during the planning phase could jeopardise a return to school offer which has been made to a pupil or family not accessing the childcare hub. This should be avoided and schools may choose to consider suspending childcare applications for short periods of time if a return to school offer previously made is at risk of being retracted. If a suspension of childcare applications is being considered it should be approved by the Chair of Governors and discussed in advance of the decision with the local authority.
9. Risk Assessments templates designed by the local authority in conjunction with Head teachers must be completed to reflect each individual schools circumstance. This must be signed off by the Chair of Governors.
10. Each school must have a record to state that a Chair of Governors (or whole Governing Body where possible) has approved their return to school planning.

4. Childcare Hubs:

From the 29th June, all children attending childcare hubs will move back to their own school or setting. For learners who are currently using childcare provision, the expectation is that schools and settings should continue to make additional provision for those learners, alongside the learning that they are entitled to for the remainder of the summer term.

Parents and carers who are critical workers can continue to apply for emergency childcare via the Newport City Council website.

Children of teaching staff may need to be accommodated at their own school or setting in order to allow staff to attend work. If this occurs, the risk assessment that was issued to schools should be completed to ensure the safety of these children as 'authorised visitors' to the school. Based on Welsh Government advice, children attending the childcare 'bubble' should not integrate with their class 'bubble' to reduce the risk of virus transmission between groups.

At this point there is no expectation that schools continue hubs provision during the summer holidays.

Standard safeguarding procedures must remain in operation for childcare and school provision.

5. Vulnerable Groups & Learning Resource Bases (LRBs)

Covid-19 Guidance Children with a Statement of SEN and / or 'Vulnerable'

The Welsh Government defines vulnerable children as including *“those with a social worker and with Statements of special educational needs. The most vulnerable of these should be prioritised according to children with most need for the provision. For the purpose of the provision those who have a social worker include children with care and support or support plans, children on the child protection register and children who are looked after. The vulnerable children definition, which includes young carers, means they can access an appropriate setting if they potentially require additional support, or a brief respite from their caring role.”*

This group of pupils includes:

- Pupils which are Looked After
- Children on the Child Protection Register
- Those pupils who have safeguarding needs which may include support and care plans
- Pupils who have been referred to partners agencies as a 'child in need'
- All pupils with a Statement of Educational Needs
- Young Carers

Vulnerable pupils may also include pupils who are:

- eFSM
- EAL
- ALN (all types)
- Pupils who have a history of mental and emotional issues
- Any other group defined by the school linked to a specific concern.

There is another group of pupils who are classed as vulnerable due to their medical conditions; they fall into the following two categories:

‘Extremely vulnerable’ or shielding learners

Pupils who have received a shielding letter from the Chief Medical Officer due to a serious underlying medical condition **must not** be asked to attend school sessions and should continue to be supported to learn from home.

‘Clinically vulnerable’ learners

Clinically vulnerable learners can attend school sessions but only with parental consent. The vulnerable learner and those around them should take extra care to adhere to strict social distancing.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) pupils should adhere to social distancing measures, however if a BAME pupil is over 28 weeks pregnant, they must remain at home due to their elevated risk.

Living with a shielding or vulnerable person

If a pupil lives in a household with someone who is vulnerable or extremely vulnerable, they should only attend school where they can adhere to social distancing and the pupil is able to understand and follow those instructions. The Welsh Government guidance states:

“This may not be possible for very young children and older children without the capacity to adhere to the instructions on social distancing. In those instances, we do not expect those children to attend and they should be supported to learn at home.”

Prioritising Vulnerable Learners

Pupils identified as vulnerable learners should be prioritised for support either through timetabled “check in, catch up and prepare sessions” or within a childcare hub for respite provision. It is important to note pupil groups should not mix as changing the membership of groups will increase the risk of transmission. Therefore, if a parent wishes for the respite/childcare hub placement to continue pupils should not then return to their main class sessions and vice versa. If a pupil is attending the Bridge Achievement Centre (BAC) they would be unable to access sessions on their main school site to prevent cross contamination.

Schools will need to make “reasonable endeavors” to support vulnerable learners to access their school or Childcare hub provision. This may include timetabling specific 1:1 staff to support, part-time placements, smaller group sizes and/or staff wearing of PPE.



Final Vulnerable
and Statemented Ch

Risk Assessment to identify Vulnerable Learners who would require school or hub access

Each school should complete the Vulnerable and Statemented Children Risk Assessment spreadsheet for each pupil who fits the relevant criteria. Where the pupil fits more than one category, the highest risk category should be used. This risk assessment must be completed

with input from other agencies/individuals involved with the child/family (e.g. social worker) where relevant.

Where a school or childcare hub place is offered, in line with the baseline covid-19 risk assessment for schools and childcare hubs, the pupil's individual risk assessment/behaviour plan must be revised to incorporate any new control measures necessary to allow the pupil to access the school or childcare hub safely, e.g. additional PPE required.

Learners with ALN and Statement of SEN Provision

All learners with ALN should be risk assessed to determine the provision they require including the individualised support they need in order to access their placement and entitlement detailed within the Statement of SEN. For some learners, the risk assessment will identify that they can attend in line with their cohort and there are few adjustments to be made. Others however, with more profound or complex needs will require a more individualised approach and if required, timetable to ensure they can access school and the support they need. This should for example, ensure that when a learner with ALN is timetabled to be in school that appropriate LSA support is also allocated on this particular day / session.

Where your environmental audit and individual pupil risk assessment do not correlate, for example where an individual pupils needs mean they are unable to safely adhere to social distancing within a classroom (even at a reduced level) or where an LSA who supports an individual pupil ordinarily is not available due to shielding for example, you should explore alternative arrangements to mitigate these risks. This could be for example, utilising a spare classroom / area where the pupil can be safely accommodated with a further reduced / enhanced ratio of adults / learners or if appropriate, provided with an individualised package of support. Where a member of staff is not available to support a learner they would ordinarily be assigned to, an alternative member of staff with suitable experience / training to meet the needs of the pupil should be assigned utilising appropriate spaces across the school. As standard, the ALNCO and individual Class Teacher would need to ensure appropriate and reasonable adjustments are made within the classroom / curriculum / provision to meet the needs of all learners.

If the outcome of both an environmental audit and individual pupil risk assessment determines that it is not possible or it is unsafe for the pupil to return, this should be discussed with your Head teacher and LA for advice. However, this cannot be a blanket approach and you must ensure this is evidenced and all alternative arrangements have been explored to mitigate any assessed risks and ensure that the pupil is not disadvantaged / discriminated against, being given every opportunity to return for designated sessions in school.

Provision of Transport

When schools partially re-open on June 29th Newport City Council will be prioritising the limited number of available transport for pupils with complex needs and disabilities who access either the Special Schools or Learning Resource Bases. Where possible Parent(s), Carer(s) or family member(s) from the same household should drop off / pick-up children from school for their "check in, catch up and prepare" sessions. This is to minimise contact with others outside of their own household and to adhere to the rules of social distancing.

Where however, there is no provision of transport available to the Parent(s), Carer(s) or family member(s), the Local Authority will consider requests for transport where:

- (i). the child is currently in receipt of a Statement of SEN which specifies the provision of transport;
- (ii). the child is currently in receipt of a Statement of SEN which does not specify the provision of transport but whose individual needs require the LA to assess their eligibility.

The criteria as defined within 'The Learners Travel (Wales) Measures 2002' will be used to assess a child's eligibility for transport provision.

Each case will be determined on its individual circumstance and there is no automatic right for transport to be provided. If provision of transport is agreed, the Local Authority will aim for this to be in place within 7-10 days.

Schools should ascertain which pupils meet the criteria and email Inclusion.enquiries@newport.gov.uk to request transport. Requests should include the pupils name, date of birth, address and sessions transport is required.

6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Within the guidance issued by Welsh Government on 10 June 2020, it was noted that PPE is not required when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom or school settings.

It is important for schools to remember that physical distancing; hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene (i.e. catching a cough or sneeze in a tissue or covering the mouth and nose with an elbow or sleeve) remain strongly evidenced to be the most effective ways to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

The Chief Medical Officer has been clear that there is no evidence to support the widespread wearing of non-medical face coverings in the community. Non-medical face coverings have been recommended where social distancing cannot be maintained but these are not replacements for far more effective measures such as social distancing and hand hygiene. Schools should ensure that they organise their environments and they operate to ensure that social distancing can be maintained throughout a routine day.

The use of PPE in relation to individual pupils should be based on individual risk assessments. A protocol for Vulnerable and Statemented pupils risk assessment is already in place outlining the risk assessment procedures. Following the identification of a pupil with specific behaviour needs, school should update their current individual risk assessment / behaviour plans - these plans will highlight if a pupil may require the usage of PPE. The principles that are in place that may indicate that PPE may be required include if a pupil is unable to adhere to social distancing guidelines and / or requires personal care alongside demonstrating behaviours where it is likely that there is a risk of bodily fluids coming into contact with others (such as spitting, coughing, vomiting etc.) . In this case, schools should make contact with Katy.Rees@newport.gov.uk or Beth.Burns@newport.gov.uk. A further discussion will be held

to determine the appropriateness of the usage of PPE and the nature and numbers of the equipment required. The PPE will be ordered via a central NCC procurement system.

There are also exceptional cases indicated below where the use of PPE is recommended:

Providing Intimate care:

- Gloves and aprons should be used when providing intimate care to a child or young person. This can include personal, hands-on care such as washing, toileting, or first aid and certain clinical procedures such as assisted feeding.
- Fluid-resistant masks and eye protection (visors) should also be worn if a risk assessment determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes such as from coughing, spitting, spray of urine or vomiting.

Providing support for pupils with medical conditions:

- If a child has a condition that may need support during the day e.g. diabetes - finger prick testing, then schools should review their risk assessment to ensure they have sufficient PPE.

Administration of First Aid

- Any staff member in a school administering First Aid should wear PPE. For this purpose, every school will receive a delivery of:
 - 1 box of masks x 50 - disposable
 - 1 box of gloves x 200 (100 pairs) - disposable
 - Aprons x 20 per roll - disposable
 - 4 Visors – Reusable (requires disinfecting and air drying following use)
- Gloves, aprons and masks should be worn if a child or young person becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 and needs direct personal care.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning the area/s where a person suspected of having COVID-19 has been.

Special Schools / Learning Resource Bases (LRBs)

- Within these settings, there may be an elevated risk in relation to the nature of the medical conditions and behaviours of pupils in attendance. Individual risk assessments should be carried out to determine where the use of PPE is required
- If an pupil is identified, via risk assessment, as being unlikely to be able to adhere to social distancing guidelines and / or requires personal care alongside demonstrating behaviours where it is likely that there is a risk of bodily fluids coming into contact with others (such as spitting, coughing, vomiting etc.) then the use of PPE may be deemed appropriate. As above, in these individual cases, schools should contact Katy.Rees@newport.gov.uk or Beth.Burns@newport.gov.uk for a specific discussion as to the requirements and the type of PPE that may be required.

- Gloves and aprons should be used when providing intimate care to a child or young person. This can include personal, hands-on care such as washing, toileting and certain clinical procedures such as assisted feeding.
- Gloves and aprons should be used when cleaning equipment or surfaces that might be contaminated with body fluids such as saliva or respiratory secretions and after cleaning an area where personal care (i.e. changing a pupil) has been administered.
- In the case of pupils with complex medical needs, gloves, fluid repellent gown, FFP3 mask and eye protection are required when undertaking aerosol generating procedures such as suction.

As mentioned previously, although the use of face coverings are not required within school settings, there may be instances where individuals within schools wish to wear one as personal choice. In these cases, Head teachers should support their staff if they choose to wear one in school. Where it is parental choice for a pupil to wear a face covering, this should also be permitted, although parents should be informed that schools cannot be responsible for ensuring the pupil wears the mask correctly at all times during the period they are in school. School cannot retain responsibility for maintain the hygiene of the mask (i.e. washing if a reusable one).

Where PPE is to be used, it is important that staff know how to put it on and remove it without cross contamination



Quick_guide_to_do
nning_doffing_stan

7. Transport

The local authority is working with passenger transport providers to develop safe transport for a prioritised group of pupils with complex needs and disabilities who cannot find alternative methods of transport. Due to unprecedented Covid related issues mainstream pupil transport will not be available when schools partially re-open on June 29th. The local authority is working to secure safe pupil transport for September and will notify schools and parents when there is more information.

However as an exception and in addition to the work to prioritise SEN / ALN / Special School transport, provision is being explored for those Welsh-medium learners in Years 11-13 for whom education is currently not available within Newport.

Social distancing applies to children, as well as adults, in order to help minimise the risk of transmission of the virus. Pupils should at all times keep 2m away from other pupils who do not live in their household. If this is not possible they should avoid physical contact and face away from others. Seating arrangements on school transport will be carefully considered and all appropriate actions taken to reduce risk and maintain the required social distancing limits where reasonable and practicable. Pupils from the same household may sit next to each other on school transport.

The use of face coverings on transport is not a legal requirement in Wales and therefore the Council does not require operators to wear these. Each operator will undertake individual risk assessments of the transport they are providing, and may determine that their drivers should wear face coverings. The Council is unable to influence this decision. This is similar to the position with escorts, with need being determined via individual risk assessments. It is likely for instance that if staff in a school require PPE to support a specific child, an escort would require similar PPE to support that child's journey to school.

Given that the transport arrangements for the period between 29th June and 17th July are fully compliant with current social distancing requirements, there is no requirement for pupils accessing this provision to wear face coverings and this is therefore discouraged due to the increased risk should it be worn or handled inappropriately (e.g. repeatedly taken on and off). Should parents / carers wish for their child to wear a face covering, they must take all responsibility for these face coverings. Neither the operator, the school or any escort will be able to support their use, fitting, removal or safekeeping.

8. Education Workforce

Staff availability will be an important consideration in the re-opening of schools. However, as an employer, we must ensure that we recognise our duty of care for our staff's health and safety, as well of those who we serve, and only ask those who are able to be in work to come to school.

Using current guidance and best practice, the Local Authority has set out how staff in schools should manage any attendance at their workplace.

What should staff do if they are shielding?

Staff who are in receipt of a shielding letter will be unable to return to a physical workplace i.e. a school, on 29th June. Staff may be required to provide their Headteacher with the relevant shielding letter. If staff have to remain at home, a Headteacher should discuss options for duties/alternative work that can be done from home. We will provide further guidance to staff who are shielding at a later date.

What should staff do if they live with someone who is shielding?

If staff are living with someone who is shielding or is extremely vulnerable, then we recommend they remain working from home. If staff have to remain at home, a Headteacher will discuss options for duties/alternative work that can be done from home. We will provide further guidance to staff who are living with someone who is shielding at a later date. If a staff member living with someone shielding requests to come back in to the workplace at this time please contact health and safety for specific advice and guidance.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>X</p> <p>Shielding – cannot return to workplace. Consideration to be given to what duties/alternative duties can be undertaken from home.</p> | <p>X</p> <p>Living with a shielding person – should not be asked to return to the workplace. Consideration to be given to what duties/alternative duties can be undertaken from home. See below for what to do if person living with someone shielding requests to come back.</p> |
| <p>?</p> <p>Vulnerable – risk assessment to establish if can return to workplace.</p> | <p>?</p> <p>Living with vulnerable person – can return to work if adhere to social distancing as part of a risk assessment.</p> |
| <p>✓</p> <p>Not vulnerable – can attend workplace if required</p> | |

What should staff do if they are vulnerable but not shielding?

Before an employee can return to work, they should complete a risk assessment with their Headteacher. This will inform decisions regarding whether the risks associated with being in school are too great or establish any measures that need to be put in place to ensure the safest possible working environment for them. If an employee has to remain at home, a Headteacher should discuss options for duties/alternative work that can be done from home.

Welsh Government has defined a list of conditions where people have an increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) whereby they need to be particularly stringent in following social distancing measures. These categories are people who have one or more of the following conditions:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below (i.e. anyone instructed to get a flu jab as an adult each year on medical grounds):
- chronic (long-term) respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](#), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#), [emphysema](#) or [bronchitis](#)
- chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](#)
- [chronic kidney disease](#)
- chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#)
- chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson’s disease](#), [motor neurone disease](#), [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- [diabetes](#)
- problems with your spleen – for example, [sickle cell anaemia](#) or if you have had your spleen removed
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](#) or [chemotherapy](#)

- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant. Pregnant women are specifically advised to work from home after 28 weeks' gestation.

Anyone with one or more of these conditions will have to work with their school to complete a risk assessment. In line with recent developments in our understanding of how the disease disproportionately affects certain groups of people we would also like to ask BAME colleagues to complete the vulnerable people risk assessment.

What should staff do if they are living with a vulnerable person (not shielding)?

Staff who are living with a vulnerable person can attend school if they can adhere to social distancing. Employees will need to complete a risk assessment with their Headteacher to ensure they can reasonably adhere to social distancing guidance. They should also continue to follow all the advice provided by Welsh Government about managing social distancing and hygiene arrangements at home.

Childcare commitments

We are equally aware that there are pressures around childcare. Schools will be as supportive as possible and will work with individuals to understand their particular set of circumstances, being as flexible as possible. Schools will continue to offer provision for children of key workers and vulnerable children who are on their school roll alongside the partial return of other learners. Children of school based staff may need to be accommodated at their own school or setting to enable staff to attend work. If you have childcare needs, you should discuss these with your Headteacher.

Staff who believe they are unable to work due to childcare reasons should discuss their concerns with their Headteacher to consider some of the following options:

- Sharing childcare responsibility with a partner in two-person households
- Fully considering the age and needs of children requiring supervision
- Using key worker childcare provision where school, nursery, childminders and/or family members are not able to provide childcare across your contracted working hours
- Reduced hours on a temporary basis
- Unpaid time off for dependents
- Working flexible hours around childcare needs e.g. early mornings, evenings and weekends

What if I still have concerns about returning to work?

We appreciate that many staff will have concerns about returning to school. Staff should discuss their concerns with their Headteacher in the first instance or you can email human.resources@newport.gov.uk.

Providing additional support

The Local Authority has an employee assistance programme, [Carefirst](#), which is available 24/7. Staff can contact Carefirst in confidence for advice, information or discuss any issues that may be causing you concern. School based employees are also able to access support from the [Education Support Partnership](#) who provide mental health and wellbeing support to all education staff

9. Premises Management

The following documents have been issued to schools:

- School Premises Recovery Checklist
- Risk Assessment for School Reopening
- Corona virus Protocol for School – Handwashing and the use of hand sanitiser
- Corona virus Protocol for School – Children who become symptomatic at school



The Council's Procurement Team is arranging a central order for Hand Sanitiser and will arrange for supplies to be distributed to schools. The need for Perspex screens and signage will need to be determined by individual schools and local arrangements made for ordering. Advice on procurement of these and any other hygiene and cleaning products can be obtained via the Procurement Team (contact is Joanne James – joanneclaire.james@newport.gov.uk)

10. Catering

There will be no school meal service or breakfast club provision in schools between 29th June and 17th July. The current Free School Meal Voucher system will continue until the end of August 2020 and thus any child attending school for the remainder of this term is required to bring with them a home packed lunch (if in school over the lunchtime period).

Individual schools will need to assess where packed lunches are eaten to ensure that social distancing can be maintained. Risk assessments will be required as appropriate. Hand hygiene protocols must be adhered to before and after eating, and any areas used for packed lunches must be cleaned appropriately before and after use.

The Free School Milk Scheme for Nursery and Foundation Phase pupils has been suspended. This will be reviewed in readiness for September 2020.

11. Central Education Services Support

Central Education Services recognise that minimising the number of staff on school sites can help lower transmission risks. This means that staff from central education services will not make routine visits to schools when they reopen. This includes EWOs, GEMS staff, Gwent Music tutors, Healthy Schools staff, the Inclusion Enrichment Team, the Service Children's Officer and the YEPF Officer. Central education services staff will provide telephone and email support and will also be available for MS Teams meetings.

Welsh Government guidance highlights that schools should seek to draw on the potential for engagement and collaboration with other agencies such as youth services and library services. To discuss the support available from youth services, please contact Alun Prescott – alun.prescott@newport.gov.uk.

12. Pupil Attendance

Schools should keep a record of attendance and families should notify the school if their child is unable to attend. Where children are not attending, particularly due to parental choice, Welsh Government requires schools to engage with parents/carers to understand why they are not attending and ensure there are no concerns about their well-being. The Education Welfare Service will support schools with this. However, schools should communicate with parents and carers to ensure that they fully understand how the risks of transmission are being mitigated and to reassure families that settings are safe to attend.

In line with Welsh Government guidance, schools should record attendance and absence in keeping with the codes below until further notice.

- All children in the expected intake for that day or in a priority group (children of critical workers and vulnerable children) should be recorded as **present** on arrival.
- Any learner who is not in the expected intake for that day or in a priority group (children of critical workers and vulnerable children) should be recorded as **Code Y** (not required to be in school).
- Learners who are in the expected intake for a session but do not attend due to shielding, self-isolation or other reasons should be recorded as **Code C**.
- Where a pupil does not attend school when they are expected to attend but they are not shielding or self-isolating and no other authorised absence code is appropriate the non-attendance should be recorded as **Code C**. This would include a learner whose family is not reassured about the health risks associated with attending and anxious about sending their child to school. Where this is the case parents and carers should notify the school at the earliest opportunity that their child will not be attending and say why.
- Learners who are in the expected intake for a session but cannot attend due to illness should be recorded as **Code I** (illness).
- Where other specific authorised absence and attendance codes are more appropriate schools may want to use these as usual, such as **Code M** (medical appointment).

Schools will not be required to report on attendance targets in relation to absence for the 2019/20 academic year, or set attendance targets for the 2020/21 academic year.

13. Supporting Digitally Excluded Learners

When returning to school, opportunities for the handling of objects between individuals should be discouraged. Any equipment that is likely to be handled by more than one person, including IT devices, should be cleaned in line with the arrangements detailed in the Covid-19 return to school risk assessment.

Schools may wish to make use of bring your own device (BYOD) options as a way of reducing the handling of digital devices between pupils. If schools wish to ask pupils to use their own digital devices in schools it is essential that notice is provided to parents that the local authority/school accepts no liability for the loss or damage to personal laptops and other equipment being used in school. It is also important to advise parents to check whether this use is covered by their own household contents insurance and, if not, whether they want to insure the items themselves.

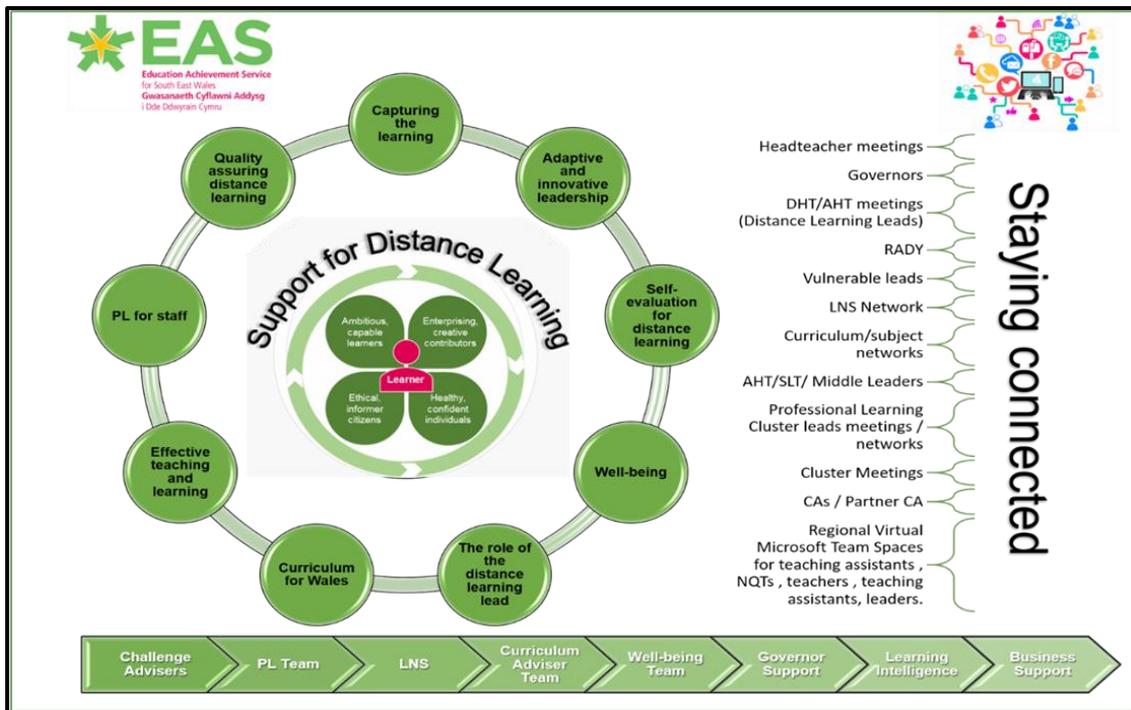
14. Distance Learning

Support and Guidance provided by the EAS

This provides a summary of the ways in which the EAS will structure its support and communication over the next phase of 'Check in, catch-up, prepare' and as we move into the return to school phase in the new academic year. This will fully align to the expectations set by Welsh Government in their recent guidance document 'Keep Education Safe: guidance on learning over the summer term' and any further information that is issued.

The weekly playlist to head teachers will continue to provide timely and responsive support to schools through the relevant phases. This includes a focus on distance learning, detailing the support and resources available that are underpinned by WG guidance and most recent international research from OECD, UNESCO, UNICEF and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). This will include specific support for leaders on agreeing expectations on strategic approaches to learning.

We understand the need to over communicate with clarity to provide reassurance regarding advice, guidance, support and expectations. As a result, we have repurposed our existing networks to support schools and settings in a time sensitive manner during the return to school. This is illustrated in the diagram below:



The EAS will continue to work with schools through networks to ensure that leaders at all levels are prepared to be adaptive, creative and innovative. For all leaders, expanding the focus on wellbeing and protection will be a key priority in the coming weeks and months. Following this, will be the absolute necessity to strengthen teaching and learning to service a

blended approach to learning where schools may be operating on partial or otherwise adapted schedules.

Support for well-being

The well-being of staff and pupils remains of paramount importance. The EAS will continue to provide resources and guidance materials for schools in supporting the recovery to school by addressing the 5 Rs: Regrouping reflection, renewal, relationships and relaxation.

Planning for learning to include support for Curriculum for Wales

The EAS will continue to support schools in planning for learning, considering what the research tells us in terms of supporting curriculum planning, teaching and learning in the next phase and how this relates to the guidance provided by Welsh Government. The timetable for the introduction of the Curriculum for Wales has not changed. It will still be a requirement for schools to introduce the curriculum from nursery to Year 7 in 2022. The current situation provides an opportunity for schools to trial approaches that are better aligned to the existing curriculum. As the recently published Welsh Government guidance stated, *'many of the answers for schools on the focus, flexibility, autonomy and challenges of this academic year can be found in the Curriculum for Wales guidance.'*

EAS will continue to develop online professional learning materials for senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers on Curriculum for Wales. There will also be a series of planned webinars to provide a forum to ask questions and find out more about the curriculum framework. The EAS will support schools in planning for the next academic year through published guidance, ensuring that this aligns to the frequency of contact that teachers have with learners.

Supporting effective teaching and learning

The region will continue to support schools in developing effective strategies for teaching and learning, in the context of distance learning. This will include the blend of some class-based learning (synchronous) and some online (synchronous and asynchronous) learning. The region will provide a range of guidance and professional learning for schools on what effective pedagogies could support the approach to 'blended' learning. This will include bespoke follow-up support to identified schools, including all secondary schools currently involved in the regional teaching and learning pilot programme.

Sharing Effective Practice

Based on the outcomes of the evidence gathered, a range of schools / settings will continue to be selected to create case studies of practice worth sharing, building on existing materials, in a variety of media formats. These will focus on:

- The school approach to distance learning and how this has refined overtime.
- Emerging strategies that the school/setting has employed to quality assure the distance learning provision for learners.
- The strategies for engagement of 'hard to reach' learners.
- Approaches to ensure the wellbeing of learners.

All case studies will be shared with schools and settings.

The expectation is that Head teachers and their staff will engage fully with the regional offer for distance learning and related activities.

Professional Learning

EAS will continue to provide a range of professional learning that focuses on:

- Supporting the entire workforce to meet the professional learning needs over the next academic year.
- Ensuring that all staff have the skills to support 'blended learning'. This will require a combination of an understanding of curriculum planning (based on the contact models that schools develop), the pedagogies that underpin effective 'blended' learning and the digital skills to support, structure and enhance this.
- Ensuring that all staff have the knowledge and skills to support learner well-being.

15. Early Years Childcare

Childcare for eligible key worker children aged 0-5 years has been available in Flying Start hubs and registered childcare providers since 14th April through the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (CCAS). This scheme will continue until August 31st for pre-school children who do not have a school place

Further information and details on how to book a childcare place can be found using the links below

<http://www.newport.gov.uk/en/Care-Support/Children-and-families/COVID-19-Childcare-for-children-aged-0-4-years.aspx>

<https://www.newport.gov.uk/en/Schools-Education/Childcare-for-prioritised-key-workers.aspx>

16. School Cleaning

Newport Norse will manage these issues for those schools within the SLA. Newport Norse is confident at being able to meet cleaning requirements as only three members of their cleaning workforce are shielding. School cleaning will recommence w/c 15th June 2020. There will be a need to ensure that schools with other cleaning arrangements ensure that their provider adheres to these requirements.

The need for rooms to be cleaned when used by different groups enforces the fact that children should remain in one room throughout the school day where possible.

The position regarding on-site cleaners during the day is in progress as schools confirm their planned opening arrangements but to date all requests can be supported.

The redeployment of other school staff for touchpoint cleaning has been confirmed as appropriate.

17. Schools Maintenance

Emergency maintenance requests can continue to be facilitated through Newport Norse via the usual Helpdesk arrangements. Any site visits that are required will be risk assessed by Newport Norse to ensure that social distancing requirements are adhered to.

Statutory maintenance checks will be carried out as normal.