

**Claire Homard**  
Chief Officer (Education and Youth)  
Prif Swyddog (Addysg ac Ieuenctid)



Parents and Carers

Your Ref/Eich Cyl

Our Ref/Ein Cyf

Date/Dyddiad

Ask for/Gofynner am

Direct Dial/Rhif Union

CH

17<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Claire Homard

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Dear Parents and Carers

### School Arrangements for January 2021

In light of the Welsh Government's announcement for new restrictions for Wales after Christmas there have also been national decisions taken about the provision of education when schools reopen in January.

Welsh Government has advised local authorities that a more flexible approach will be needed to account for possible increases in the transmission of the virus, particularly after the Christmas holidays where there will have been greater mixing between families. They have advised schools to make greater use of remote learning approaches in the first few weeks of the new year, with an expectation that all schools will be back to delivering face-to-face learning by the 18<sup>th</sup> January, unless exceptional circumstances exist.

Flintshire County Council has taken the decision, in consultation with its Headteachers and in line with Welsh Government advice, that Flintshire schools will not reopen for face-to-face learning for the week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and will provide online learning for all pupils.

Schools are required to make appropriate provision for learners who are considered to be vulnerable and this may include attendance at school for some pupils. All schools are also required to make in-school provision for the children of critical workers where alternative childcare is genuinely not available. It is essential that critical workers, as defined by Welsh Government, are able to fulfil their roles whilst schools are providing learning digitally.

Each school will be contacting parents to identify which children may need to continue to attend school during this time. The legislation requires schools to make childcare available as a minimum from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Working within the regulations set out by Welsh Government, critical worker provision will be in place in Flintshire schools no later than Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January. Schools are not required to make provision if it is a designated school training day.

The decision when to move schools back to face to face learning will not be made until the 6<sup>th</sup> January when the local data around the virus has been analysed and the level of risk determined. This will be communicated to parents as quickly as possible. The Council's aim is to return to face to face learning as quickly as possible, but only when it is safe to do so.

County Hall, Mold. CH7 6ND

[www.flintshire.gov.uk](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk)

Neuadd y Sir, Yr Wyddgrug. CH7 6ND

[www.siryfflint.gov.uk](http://www.siryfflint.gov.uk)



The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh or English  
Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg

We appreciate this information is coming to you at very short notice but the Council has only been made aware of Welsh Government's position within the last 24 hrs. Children entitled to Free School Meals will continue to receive direct payments for the period of remote learning. More details around catering arrangements for children who need to attend school either as a vulnerable learner or for childcare arrangements will be communicated as quickly as possible. Once schools have determined their opening arrangements for January, as some have scheduled training days, we will also be able to communicate arrangements for those who are eligible for school transport and need to assess if they will be physically attending school for the reasons outlined above.

It is our expectation that all learners will receive the same learning offer from their school whether they are at home and engaged in remote learning or whether they need to be physically in the building.

Whilst we appreciate that this decision may cause some anxieties and there may be some unanswered questions, we are working at speed with our headteachers on this last day of the term to put things in place for a smooth and safe start to the new year and will continue to provide parents and carers with information via letters from schools and on our website [www.flintshire.gov.uk](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely



Claire Homard  
Chief Officer, Education & Youth



Cllr Ian Roberts  
Leader of the Council & Cabinet  
Member for Education