

Council welcomes update on school reopening plans

Bridgend County Borough Council has welcomed the recent Welsh Government announcement that plans are under development for the re-opening of schools in Wales, and that they will be carried out in phases.

Education minister Kirsty Williams has laid out the key principles which will govern the process, and has emphasised that any reopening will prioritise the safety of pupils, teachers and staff while looking after their mental, emotional and physical well-being.

The minister has stated that she wants schools to ensure they can plan ahead by producing evidence and information demonstrating that they have the confidence of parents, staff and students in place, and can continue to contribute towards national efforts and strategies which are combatting the spread of Covid-19 across the UK.

As part of the reopening process, schools will need to be able to prioritise the needs of learners at key points, including children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and have guidance in place to support measures such as distancing, managing attendance and wider protective actions which are consistent with the Welsh Government's framework for decision making.

The Leader, Cllr Huw David, said: "This is encouraging news, and I am sure that residents throughout Bridgend County Borough will be pleased to know that plans are under development for the safe and phased reopening of schools.

"While this will have to be very carefully and suitably phased on a gradual basis to ensure the safety of children and staff, the phased reopening of schools will prove to be of help to parents, carers and guardians, and will form an important step forward as we seek to return young people to school-based learning."

Cllr Dr Charles Smith, Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration, added: "A wide range of online learning resources have been made available to ensure that schools can maintain a continuity of learning during the coronavirus pandemic, but we are all keen to see children benefitting from a return to their school learning environments as soon and as safely as possible.

"Once further details of how the reopening plans will be implemented are known, the council will work with schools and partners to ensure a safe, seamless transition can take place.

"In the meantime, we'd like to thank parents and pupils alike for their understanding and continued co-operation."