Dear Parents and Carers, 20/03/20

Thank you for your support and patience. We have just received this information from the local authority.

Childcare Provision

Schools to remain open to provide effective childcare to support our **essential workers** and **vulnerable children** in these significantly challenging times. Please see link below for Government definition and eligibility. During the week commencing 23rd March, emergency childcare will be offered in children's usual school settings for 3-14 year olds. This provision will be available during normal school hours and usual school transport will be available for eligible learners from the 23rd to the 27th of March. Due to staffing issues there will be no breakfast provision during the 23rd and 27th of March.

For the week commencing Monday 30th March, emergency childcare will be offered in seven key centres from Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm. The Council is exploring future home to childcare transport arrangements for 3-14 year olds from March 30th onwards for the childcare between normal school hours. The provision for 3-14 year olds will be offered in seven school settings throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf area, namely:-

- Aberdare Community School
- Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
- Ferndale Community School
- Tonyrefail Community School
- Ysgol Nant-gwyn
- Ysgol Llanhari
- Ysgol Hen Felin (only for those pupils who require specialist provision).

Childcare provision will be made available for 'essential workers' between the ages of 0-3 and 3-14. Existing private providers will continue to provide for 0-3 year olds. For 3-14 year olds, childcare provision will be available in the 7 identified school settings.

Further information will be available in due course. Lunch only will be provided for pupils in childcare for week 1. Breakfast and lunch will be provided for pupils in childcare for week 2.

Parents/carers of **essential workers** (please see the following for the Government definition and eligibility https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision) will be required to fill in an e-form to identify whether or not they require childcare (please see attached Appendix 1).

Future childcare arrangements will be clarified prior to the Easter break as arrangements are evolving at a swift pace. The local authority will process all applications from parents and carers and will notify schools in due course.

Free School Meals

All learners who are eligible for a free school meals will be provided with a meal and this will be made available to parents/carers from a primary school site. A link to an e-form can be found in Appendix 1 below.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

Janine Mundy
Head teacher

APPENDIX 1

Emergency Childcare and Free School Meals Breakfast and Packed Lunch

Emergency Childcare Request

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then childcare provision will be available for them.
3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for childcare provision. These include:

- Health and social care;
- Education and childcare;
- Key public services;
- Local and national government;
- Food and other necessary goods;
- Public safety and national security;

- Transport;
- Utilities, communication and financial services.

Further details is provided in the following link:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision)

Emergency childcare provision is available for these essential frontline workers during the Coronavirus school closure period. This emergency childcare is for children up to the age of 14 years.

This emergency childcare is available to RCT residents and RCTCBC employees only.

If you are a key frontline worker with a child/children between the ages of 3 to 14 years, please click on the attached link to an e-form
https://forms.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/Web/coronaviruschildcare/startnew
and complete the required details.

Please note that if you have more than one child, a further form will need to be completed and there is a link at the end of the form to enable a further form to be completed.

During the week commencing 23rd March, the emergency childcare will be offered in your usual school. Normal school hours will operate and usual school transport for those who normally receive it will be provided. For week commencing Monday 30th March, emergency childcare will be offered in seven emergency centres Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm for key frontline workers. The Council is exploring future transport arrangements for 3 to 14 year olds from 30th March onwards for the emergency childcare between normal school hours. The provision for 3 to 14 year olds is being offered in seven school settings throughout the Rhondda Cynon Taf area.

In addition, it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure that if their child is vulnerable due to an underlying medical or health need that they self-isolate their child.

If you are an essential frontline worker with a child/children aged 0-3 years please email childcareplayemergencyplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk to arrange your support.

Free School Meals Breakfast and Packed Lunch Request

Parents/carers of children who are entitled to free school meals will be able to collect a breakfast and packed lunch from their local primary school during the Coronavirus school closure period.

The food will be a cold provision which will be packaged for take away and can be collected between 11am and midday each day. Each pack will contain a packed lunch for the collection day and breakfast for the following morning.

Please click on the attached link to an e-form
https://forms.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/Web/coronavirusfreeschoolmeals/startnew
and complete the required details.

Vulnerable Learners

If your child is deemed to meet vulnerable learner eligibility and you require emergency childcare please complete the attached link.
https://forms.rctcbc.gov.uk/en/Web/coronaviruschildcare/startnew

Vulnerable learners include: children with safeguarding and welfare needs, children looked after, young carers and children with children with disabilities. During the week commencing 23rd March, the emergency childcare will be offered in your usual school. Normal school hours will operate and usual school transport for those who normally receive it will be provided. For week commencing Monday 30th March, emergency childcare will be offered in seven emergency centres. Provision for vulnerable learners will be for core school hours only. The Council is exploring future transport arrangements for 3 to 14 year olds from 30th March onwards for the emergency childcare between normal school hours. The provision for 3 to 14 year olds is being offered in seven school settings throughout the Rhondda Cynon Taf area.

Please ensure that if you child is vulnerable and has significant medical and health needs that your child is self-isolated. Please see the attached link for further details.
https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/guidance-on-social-distancing-for-everyone-in-the-uk-and-protecting-older-people-and-vulnerable-adults/