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FAO: All Stakeholders

Vale of Glamorgan Position Statement – Re-opening of Schools

On 3rd June, Welsh Government stated that schools were to partially reopen, from 29th June and that this would be for a period of four weeks, extending the summer term by an extra week. In addition, the indication was that in October, the half term break would be extended to 2 weeks rather than the usual 1 week break. Since this announcement, the Local Authority has been working closely with schools and headteachers to prepare for a safe and welcoming return for our pupils to check in, catch up and prepare for the future.

Following this initial announcement, Welsh Government and trade unions have been in discussions regarding the 4th week of this proposed term, which falls outside of existing, established terms times. At present both parties have not yet been able to reach a common position nationally on these proposals for the extension of the term into a fourth week. Furthermore, the proposal for the autumn half term in October to be extended by a week to off-set the additional week outlined above has also not been confirmed. We had hoped that these issues would be resolved prior to any announcements, nationally and subsequently locally, to avoid confusion and allow consistency across Wales and also across the Vale of Glamorgan.

On consulting with Headteacher colleagues across the Vale of Glamorgan it is clear that staff, where they are able to do so, are very keen to return to school to offer support to pupils before the summer break. Many were willing to do so on a voluntary basis for the additional week.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council had originally been minded to support schools to open on a voluntary basis for the additional week of term. However, the unresolved contractual issues and the absence of any form of clarity on the extension of the autumn half term does not support this course of action.

The position in the Vale of Glamorgan therefore, which has been agreed by the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education and Regeneration as advised by the Managing Director and Director of Learning and Skills is that we will not be asking nor expecting teachers and other school based staff to work for this extra week as there is no contractual obligation for them to do so. The end of term in the Vale of Glamorgan as previously agreed is Monday 20th July. Many schools will have planned one or more INSET days to take place at the end of term and will therefore be in contact with parents to confirm the date from which schools are closed to pupils.

With regard to the existing childcare provision being offered in schools for keyworkers and vulnerable pupils, Welsh Government has made it clear that they have no expectation that this will be provided throughout the summer holiday. On that basis, schools will continue to provide childcare for the existing users of these groups up until the end of the summer term, on an individual school basis, and subject to available staffing. Following the end of term, schools are not expected to provide any further childcare provision. Welsh Government has recently announced that from 22nd June private childcare providers can reopen. This will enhance the range of provision open to parents, providing many more options for childcare throughout the summer and beyond.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council and its schools are responding to a very fluid situation where Welsh Government guidance and actions arising from that guidance are changing on a daily basis. In this context, we are working with our schools to manage these demands and provide as much support as possible to all children. This of course needs to be balanced with what is practicable from an operational perspective, in the best interests of our pupils and families and within the context of the welfare of our own staff on the front line.

It is clearly regrettable that there has been no certainty provided nationally both in terms of the issue surrounding the summer term, but also with regards to the situation in October. In the absence of clarity, we feel we have no other alternative other than to set out the position as outlined above.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank schools for their hard work, dedication and commitment to the learners of the Vale of Glamorgan during these very challenging times.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Lis Burnett
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for
Education and Regeneration



Paula Ham
Director of Learning and Skills