



## Frequently Asked Questions

The Welsh Government has a dedicated coronavirus (COVID-19) frequently asked questions, which relates to the latest guidance and legislation. We have rationalised this information into a school context.

### School Specific FAQs

1. **What is expected of my child when school re-opens?**

We expect all students to attend school when we re-open. Naturally, some will not be able to attend on medical advice. However, all students who can should attend.

2. **Why do Year 11 and Year 13 get preferential treatment to other year groups leading up to 10th September?**

In line with the Education Minister's announcement on 9th July, schools are able to use the fortnight at the start of the term to prioritise key groups. Given Year 11 and Year 13 have key examinations this year, the school believes this time can be used effectively to accelerate their 'catch up' from missed work. Furthermore, a day to support our Year 7 and Year 12 students during this time is designed to support their transition. All pupils will receive extended induction time with their form tutors, to ensure all aspects of school return are fully understood.

3. **Will all students and staff be expected to wear PPE?**

No. Personal, protective equipment will not be necessary for all members of the school community. However, based on latest Welsh Government Guidance, the current advice from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales is that face coverings are recommended for all members of the public over 11 years in indoor settings in which social distancing cannot be maintained, including schools and school transport. Therefore, we expect all pupils to wear facemasks on buses, in corridors and communal indoor areas. It is not currently our expectation that pupils wear facemasks during lessons but we will continue any further medical advice.

4. **How will you keep my child safe if/when they return to school?**

As always, we will do everything we can to ensure the safety of your child (and staff). We have undertaken a comprehensive assessment of the risks associated with phased re-opening and coronavirus (COVID-19). We have identified a range of control measures which are designed to lower these risks. However, it does require students, staff and families to work with us to adhere to these.



5. **My child receives a free school meal. Will they still be fed when they return?**

Parents/carers of students who currently receive a free school meal have been receiving money debited directly into their specified bank accounts. While the local authority continues to do this, the school will not be issuing meals to these students without charge. However, as soon as this scheme ceases, the issuing of free school meals will resume as normal.

6. **How will the school ensure my child catches up on the missed learning? How will the school support those students who have not been as engaged with online learning?**

At GCSE and AS/A2, the WJEC have been consulting on proposed changes specifications. Therefore, we will review and re-assess the situation once a decision has been made. However, as a result of high quality teaching, we are confident that students will be able to catch up on their missed learning providing they show their usual commitment and positive approach.

The Education Minister announced on 9th July that funding will be made available to schools to support accelerated learning for identified groups of students. This will include those students who have not engaged with online learning during the period of lockdown. While it is too early to share our plans with this yet, we do know that our 'recovery' curriculum is designed to strengthen literacy and numeracy skills to facilitate access to the broader curriculum. Coupled with highly 19 effective teaching from our staff, we are confident our students will be able to make the necessary progress.

7. **My child has a special educational need. How will they be supported in September?**

For our students with special educational needs, the Inclusion Department will continue to work hard with you to support your child with their learning. Teaching assistants will be deployed as normal in September and be on hand to offer bespoke support. However, should you have a child with an additional learning need and are concerned then please get in touch directly with Ms, Tracy Young Head of Inclusion, via email [TYoung.phs@valelearning.com](mailto:TYoung.phs@valelearning.com)

8. **What if another child misbehaves and doesn't take the safety of others seriously?**

During the first phase of increased operations, all of our students demonstrated a calm, measured and respectful approach to learning. This is one of the main reasons why it was such a successful period. However, as you will know, in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff, everyone at school needs to take responsibility. We will continue to expect everyone to show mutual respect and empathy to each other in order to keep everyone safe.

Where a student has sustained difficulty understanding and/or fails to follow social distancing



and personal protective procedures, the health and safety of themselves, fellow students and staff will be compromised. The school will follow robustly its 'Behaviour for Learning' policy. We expect parents/carers carefully explain the rationale to students so that this doesn't become a concern. However, we cannot risk the safety of students and/or staff.

9. **Will there still be sets for different subjects, taking into account for 'bubbling' of groups? How will 'bubbles' work for students who have already chosen options?**

In order to re-open in September, the school has had to make a number of compromises. So that we can minimise the risk of social mixing, we have decided to group year groups into 'bubbles', where they will remain largely in the same class with same pupils. For learning purposes, it is appropriate to group students accordingly students can access the learning at their own pace. This will enable teaching staff to meet their needs more fully. It is designed to keep a person (students and staff) safe, which are the underlying principles of our return to full operations.

In line with the Welsh Government guidance, there will be occasions where mixing between students is unavoidable. Therefore, by setting year group 'bubbles' this will support this. At GCSE, groups are already taught by ability and therefore, we acknowledge that there will be some movement around the school site to access specialist teaching and/or classrooms.

10. **Why will I not be allowed on to the school site?**

At the time of writing, the current guidance suggests the school should limit the number of people all members of the community should come into contact with. Therefore, in line with this guidance, and with the extent of building works being carried out, coupled with modifications to staff parking mean that with the exception of school staff, the services for vulnerable students, the school buses and some construction traffic, no other vehicles will be permitted to drive on to the school site and this restriction includes parents dropping off children for school which must now take place off the school site.

Also, From September, we will be able to meet with parents on the school site. Social distancing and hand sanitising will be in place in our reception area. **Please note that parents will only be able to come onto the school site for a pre-arranged appointment.**

11. **Are all students expected to bring belongings with them, such as pens, books etc. If so, do they keep them on their possession throughout the day?**

Yes. Students should bring their pens and equipment with them. They will be responsible for keeping their personal belongings with them. There will be an opportunity for staff to mark



exercise books etc. However, in the first instance there will be greater emphasis on verbal feedback and self-assessment to lower the risk of transmission.

**12. Will our students be studying the full curriculum on return or will emphasis still be on core subjects?**

The school will always support a broad and balanced curriculum. Therefore, we will continue to offer our subjects as normal. However, English and Mathematics represent foundation knowledge and understanding which supports wider learning.

**13. Why does the school want to reinstate school uniform?**

A school uniform helps play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of the school and sets the appropriate tone. From September, the school will revert to its usual uniform expectations. We ask parents to support us fully with this. Uniforms will not be required to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal.

**14. Will lunchtime and after school sports clubs be reintroduced? Will external staff, such as peripatetic music teachers be able to offer session?**

Fixtures against other schools is not likely in the near future. Also, contact sports will not be permitted until the science and medical advice indicates it is safe to do so. However, after the initial reintroduction process, our PE staff will seek to offer these where it is possible and safe to do so. Similarly, the school will work with the local authority and providers to offer peripatetic sessions where possible. However, owing to the risks associated, there may need to be a reduced offer available.

**15. Can we expect examination timetables to change for GCSE and A Level next year?**

In England, there have been discussions around a potential change to the dates for examinations in the summer 2021 series. If this is announced then it is likely that Wales will approach this in a similar way. However, to date there has been no announcement. There will be an opportunity for entry to linear mathematics in November for Year 11 students. The school will assess suitability for this, early at the start of the term.

**16. If there is a possibility of a second wave which caused forced partial or full closure, what will distance learning look like from September?**

Staff have received a significant amount of training during the period of time from 29th June until the end of the summer term. In addition, the school has made changes to its infrastructure to facilitate high quality distance learning. We are currently developing 'PHS Online Academy' that will support your child if this situation occurs.



**17. How can parents/carers help the school to support full operations from September?**

The school will not return to normality any time soon. Therefore, we understand that there will be challenges throughout this next phase of recovery. The support of families, as well as students, is crucial to helping us make this work. The school will do everything it can to 'do the right thing' by our students. Parents/carers can support the school by ensuring their child has the correct equipment for learning; has appropriate uniform, including the correct shoes; and spends time to reinforce the importance of the need to follow the safety measures in school.