



27th August 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students/Annwyl Rieni,Gwarchodwyr a Myfyrwyr

We hope you and your families are well and have had a chance to relax over the summer holidays.

All staff at the school are very much looking forward to welcoming our pupils back and with the autumn term rapidly approaching, I am writing to give as much clarity as possible on the arrangements for our return to school.

Getting our physical environment ready

We are absolutely delighted with the progress that has been made, in the construction of our new school and we hope our community is as excited as we are to watch the changing skyline on a daily basis. Even so, we must be mindful that there are building works going on and to be vigilant. We work very closely with construction company Bouygues and can reassure all parents, that our grounds are safe and ready for pupils to return.

It's now time to return!

We have greatly missed our pupils and we have been preparing extensive plans for us to make up for lost time. Parents and pupils are reminded that Tuesday, September 1st, and Wednesday, September 2nd, are designated planning and preparation dates and therefore the school will be open for staff only. All of our risk assessments have been thoroughly reviewed and updated and all staff will be fully trained in the processes and systems to ensure that we welcome everyone back safely. Only new Year 7 pupils and Barry 6th form pupils will attend the school on Thursday, September 3rd, with Year 7, 11, 12, and 13 pupils only on Friday September 4th. During week beginning Monday 7th, all year groups will be returning to school on a phased basis as indicated below.

The schedule for return is as follows:

	Date	Return
Week A	Tuesday 1 st September	Staff Start-up and Preparation Day
	Wednesday 2 nd September	Staff Start-up and Preparation Day
	Thursday 3 rd September	Year 7 Induction – Barry 6 th
	Friday 4 th September	Year 11 Induction & Years 7, 12 & 13
Week B	Monday 7 th September	Year 10 Induction & Years 7, 11, 12 & 13
	Tuesday 8 th September	Year 9 Induction & Years 7, 10, 11, 12 & 13
	Wednesday 9 th September	Year 8 Induction & Years 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 & 13
	Thursday 10 th September	All Learners – Additional Induction Time
	Friday 11 th September	All Learners – Additional Induction Time



It is important that attendance is compulsory for all unless they are suffering from illness or are showing any COVID-19 symptoms. This includes those pupils who were previously shielding.

Travel to School

All students travelling on a school bus service or public transport will be required to follow the national guidance and will be required to wear a face mask while travelling. **Please be aware that pupils not wearing facemasks will not be permitted on the bus.**

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.

Additional supervision will be in place at the school gates to meet the students on arrival, whether that is on school bus, on foot or on bicycle. All of these measures are in place for the health and safety of all members of our community.

Health and Safety Information

I attach a summary of the key health and safety advice below. For full details, parents are encouraged to read the operational guidance for reopening schools, on the Welsh Government link. <https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>

- ✓ Do not send your child(ren) to school if they are unwell, or if they or any other household member are showing any COVID-19 symptoms; including a high temperature, loss of taste/smell or persistent, dry cough. We ask that parents contact the school immediately if any pupil suffers from these symptoms, or if they have received a positive result for COVID-19 so that we can implement our tracking and tracing system. The pupil will need to self-isolate for a period of 10 days, with all other 'contacts' at home self-isolating for a period of 14 days. We ask that parents communicate regularly with the school in order to keep us informed of any developments should this situation arise.
- ✓ In order to reduce the number of 'contacts' between pupils and staff, and pupils with each other, to ultimately reduce the risk of cross-contamination; we have committed to containing each year group into a 'Year Group Bubble', creating an extended contact group, which will be your child's school year.



- ✓ in line with the latest health guidelines, although pupils do not have to keep a social distance of 2m from each other, we will require pupils to keep 2m away from staff and other adults at all times.
- ✓ We have introduced will operate one-way systems, within the school buildings. This includes designating stairs as up-only and down-only. Pupils will be reminded of this arrangement on their first day back.
- ✓ During lunch and break times, pupils will only be able to congregate with pupils within their 'Year Group Bubble' at designated areas.
- ✓ We will encourage pupils to wash their hands regularly during the day.
- ✓ Hand sanitiser is located around the school, but we kindly ask that if you have a personal supply that you send this to school with your child. In accordance with the school's behaviour policy, we will deal with any misuse of hand sanitiser strictly.
- ✓ We have varied the start time of breaks and will be planning a 'stagger' to the end of the day so that all pupils leave the premises safely by 14:55.
- ✓ We will continue to implement an intensive cleaning program around the school site.
- ✓ We ask that parents remind their children of good respiratory hygiene and encourage them to follow the steps of "**Catch it, Bin it, and Kill it.**"
- ✓ In line with the latest health guidelines, wearing a face covering is not essential at this time. We are continuing to monitor this, and should the situation change we will be back in contact immediately.

What additional essential measures will be in place in school?

- Any member of our school community who is unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 must stay at home
- Robust hand and respiratory hygiene including ventilation will be in place
- We will continue with our increased cleaning arrangements
- We will engage actively with the Test, Trace & Protect system
- We will plan the structure of our school day to reduce the contact between groups of students as much as possible
- We will arrange our classrooms with forward facing desks
- Staff will maintain distance from learners and other staff as much as possible



So what does this look like in practical terms?

As part of our planning for a full return in the autumn term we have carried out the implementation of a robust risk assessment. We have put control measures in place for the additional risks presented by a return to full capacity, continuing to work with our Local Authority (LA). We have reviewed all Fire Evacuation and Health and Safety policies in light of returning to full capacity.

Should I wear a face covering or PPE?

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 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.

Pupil advice whilst wearing a facemask

Pupils wearing face coverings to school, there is a process in place for pupils to remove them safely on arrival at the school site. According to the latest guidance, the front of the cover should not be touched but instead it should be removed from the sides. (i.e. using the elastic that goes around the ears). Their hands should be washed straight away and then temporary masks thrown into the bin.

Re-usable masks need to be kept in a plastic bag that can be taken home, with hands being washed once again before going into the classroom. We will be re-iterating and re-enforcing all specific routines during Induction all pupils will be advised.

Please be aware that we expect all facemasks to be plain, single colour. We will not accept multi-coloured, patterned facemasks. We have been working closely with the LA, and it is our understanding that we will be provided with additional supplies as needed.

Identifying clusters and outbreaks

A potential cluster is defined as two or more cases of COVID-19 among learners or staff in our school within 14 days, or an increased rate of absence due to suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.

If an outbreak is declared we have protocols in place to work with the Outbreak Control Team to implement the recommended adjustments to how our school operates. The priority will be infection prevention, control measures and social distancing.

Response to any infection

Our risk assessments include a protocol for any cluster/outbreak of two or more cases of COVID-19



in the school community. Our planning and groupings will minimise the impact of a local lockdown.

- We are engaging with the Test, Trace, Protect strategy
- We will manage confirmed cases of COVID-19 among the school community and contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice
- Under no circumstances should learners or staff attend school if they:
 - feel unwell, have any of the four identified COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of taste or smell) or they have tested positive to COVID-19 in the past 7 days
 - live in a household with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive to COVID-19 in the past 14 days
- We have a clear escalation policy and procedures in place if learners or staffs begin to show symptoms of COVID-19 while at the school. Those showing symptoms will be kept separate until they can be collected and taken home.

School Uniform & Equipment

All students in years 7 through to 13 will be required to be in full school uniform in September as our uniform plays a valuable role in contributing to our ethos, identity and preparation for learning. We would also request that your child returns in September with a fully fitted out pencil case (pens, pencils, ruler, rubber, coloured pencils). This will reduce the need for resources to be shared.

Classroom-based resources such as books will be used and shared within the contact group but will be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces.

Resources that are shared between contact groups, such as sports, art and science equipment will be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between contact groups.

Pupils and their parents are reminded of rules relating to pupils' hair and shoes.

What about catering facilities in school?

Our catering company Big Fresh, will be providing catering facilities in school for all pupils, from the 3rd September. All new pupils will be provided with their fob account system during their 1st day induction. Those pupils who are eligible for free school meals, will automatically have their account credited and meals will be available at the school even on days where their year groups have not yet returned, students wanting to take up this provision should report to the school at their allocated lunch time. We as a school will be implementing a staggered approach to break and lunchtimes, to ensure the integrity of contact groups is maintained throughout the school day.



Will visitors be allowed onto the school site?

We have peripatetic staff and cleaning staff that will be required to come onto the school site each day. Risk assessments are completed to ensure that these colleagues do so safely. 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.**

New Times of the School Day

After lots of consideration, we have as a school have made slight changes to the school day. The rationale behind this was to ensure we were able to stagger break and lunchtimes, to ensure we maintained the integrity of 'Year Group Bubble'. Please see table below.

School Day	Years 8, 9, 10	School Day	Years 7, 11, 12/13
School opens	8.30	School opens	8.30
Lesson 1	8.30 - 9.30	Lesson 1	8.30 - 9.30
Lesson 2	9.30 - 10.30	Lesson 2	9.30 - 10.30
Morning Break	10.30 - 10.50	Tutorial/Assembly	10.30 - 10.55
Move to form Rooms	10.50 - 10.55		
Tutorial/Assembly	10.55 - 11.15	Morning Break	10.55 - 11.15
Lesson 3	11.15 - 12.15	Lesson 3	11.15 - 12.15
Lunch	12.15 - 12.55	Lesson 4	12.15 - 13.15
Lesson 4	12.55 - 13.55	Lunch	13.15 - 13.55
Lesson 5	13.55 - 14.55	Lesson 5	13.55 - 14.55

There will be a staggered end of day for pupils:

Year 7 – 14.45

Years 8 & 9 – 14.50

Years 10, 11, 12/13 – 14.55



Please remind your child, that if it is their 1st day back in school, they need to go straight through the main entrance to the Main Hall. They will then be joined by their form tutor. They will then be escorted to their form room with their tutors. On day one, Year 12/13 are to go to the Lesser Hall.

For the remaining days of the 1st two weeks back, pupils will enter via the nearest entrance to their form room. By week three the pupils will enter via the entrance nearest to their first lesson.

What about attendance?

All students should return to school in the autumn term unless they have a medical reason not to. All other students should attend, but with social distancing and regular hand washing.

We will keep a daily record of attendance and request that parents notify us daily if their child is unable to attend, explaining the reason for this. We will be working proactively to engage with families to identify any barriers to students returning to school. We aim to identify any further support needed.

What if there is a second spike?

Although the intention is for all students to return to school in the autumn, we have already commenced our contingency planning in the event of a further local lockdown. Given the uncertainty over future transmission levels, for the foreseeable future, it is essential that we prepare for a range of possible circumstances.

It is difficult to identify any positive to come out of the current pandemic, but if there is one it might be that our teachers at Pencoedtre have been working tirelessly to develop an exciting approach to learning, so that if this situation occurs, we can continue and enhance our academic support to your child. The development of 'PHS Online Academy for Learning' is extremely exciting addition to provision at PHS.

Calendar of events for 2020-21

Although our planning for the year ahead may have to be fluid, we do need to provide some order and certainty for our community. Therefore, our calendar has been designed with a conscious decision of the need to have our staff in front of our students for the maximum amount of time to prepare for the summer exam series. We are in the final stages of consultation on our proposed calendar, and will publish to all stakeholders at the start of the new academic year.



Conclusion

Also, please can I point you to the 'Frequently Asked Questions' document in the News & Newsletter section, here will find additional school specific questions and answers.

Finally, I would like to finish by thanking you in advance all for your patience and support over the coming period. This is a very exciting time to be a member of the 'Pencoedtre Family' and I for one would much value your contribution in the setting of a new 'Vision' for our school. I consider your contribution as parents and guardians as vital for our success and I will send further details on how to get involved in this shortly.

Thank you for reading/Diolch am ddarllen,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. G. Humphreys', written in a cursive style.

Mr Lee G Humphreys,

Headteacher