

Ysgol Tanyfron

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Headteacher / Pennaeth: Mr D S Lloyd

Chair of Governors: Mr S Wynne

6th June 2020

Coronavirus / Covid-19 Update – June 6th 2020

Dear Parent/Guardians,

Firstly can I apologise for communicating with you over a weekend. However, in these difficult times I feel that giving you as much time to process information as possible can only be an advantage in helping you to arrive at a decision for your child(ren). This letter aims to provide you with an update from school's perspective whilst a summary of the key points from the education minister's announcement are noted at the bottom of the correspondence.

The announcement by the education minister on Wednesday, as I stated in previous correspondences, detailed that schools would reopen from Monday 29th June and the summer term would be extended by one week, with the term now finishing on Friday 24th July. Despite not all the specific information being released, one decision I know is guaranteed is that as parents/guardians you are going to have to decide if your child(ren) will return to school before the summer term ends.

Despite Welsh government guidance still not with us, the picture and expectations are starting to become a little clearer. At the heart of this communication is the notion of trying to give you enough time to make that decision, which I appreciate, is a daunting and challenging one. As a result, I wish to share the most up to date information I have with you to help you make that decision.

The minister has indicated that schools will only be able to welcome up to and no more than a third of pupils on a daily basis. Put into context, Ysgol Tanyfron has 142 pupils, which means we can accommodate no more than 46 pupils on any specific weekday and priority of these places remains with pupils of key workers and vulnerable pupils.

The reopening of schools has been branded as an opportunity to 'Check in, Catch up and Prepare'. There is a requirement to provide an equal opportunity for **all** pupils to access the same provision. Based on our school numbers and staffing ratios this equates to between 2-4 full days over the 20 day period.

Please note – Guidance is still being sought as to whether the offer is for Nursery pupils due to them being classed as 'non-statutory'.

The guidance will state the need for social distancing measures throughout the school at all times and during the drop off and pick up times, all of which are likely to be staggered. Each classroom setting will look different to when we closed on the 20th March. For example, Miss Harris's class, which is normally home to 27 year 5/6 pupils, could only accommodate 9 pupils under the new guidelines. To help parents/guardians appreciate the scale of the changes we will be, on Monday, publishing photos and videos of a range of classes to show the differences and give you an honest insight into the scale of social distancing measures.

Social distancing is a prime concern of parents/guardians and rightly so. As a school, our priority will be to promote social distancing and personal hygiene. However, I must be clear and honest that we won't be able to create a risk free environment. We will work hard to encourage all children to adhere to social distancing guidelines, although we cannot guarantee that all pupils will understand or be able to follow these for prolonged periods.

Around social distancing, the following areas will also need to be considered –

- To support social distancing, there will be no breakfast club facilities.
- We understand that it would make sense to have siblings in school on the same day, but we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.
- Once school reopens, to support with social distancing, we will require your support with certain elements of first aid, with the need to change any of our children (if they are wet or soiled) and there will be a zero tolerance approach to challenging behaviour. (Parents will be expected to come in to school to support.)
- To support our pupils with social distancing, all children must be dropped off and collected by an adult.

Further guidance is still to be issued on the number of pupils, which would make up each 'bubble'. Bubbles of children would stay the same throughout their 'days' in school and with the same staff member, however the staff member will potentially work with more than one bubble throughout the week. At this moment, I cannot guarantee this would be their normal class teacher. Bubbles would have separate play times and lunchtimes from other 'bubbles' in school on the same day. I must also add that it is likely 'bubbles' may have pupils who have been 'key worker' pupils since lockdown began.

I cannot at this time be specific with the days and number of times your child(ren) will be in school. This will be dependant on the number of pupils who wish to return to school. This information will be cascaded at a later date. The school day will run from 08.55am to either 2.30pm or 3.00pm. This is to be confirmed with the local authority. For key worker pupils the day will finish at 3.00pm as normal.

I appreciate that this information may not answer all your questions but unfortunately with the timescales presented to us we need each family to inform us of their decision as to whether their child(ren) will be returning to school or not for the remainder of the summer term by **3pm on TUESDAY 9th JUNE**. We have been informed that once a decision is submitted to us and the local authority, parents/guardians will **NOT** be able to change their mind due to the specific planning requirements. We ask that parents/guardians communicate their decision via SEESAW or the schools email address.

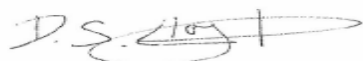
PLEASE NOTE - THIS DECISION IS BASED UPON YOUR CHILD(REN) RETURNING TO SCHOOL FOR THE PERIOD OF 29TH JUNE TO 24TH JULY ONLY.

To help try to answer any questions the daily phone line will be available throughout Monday or alternatively you can message via SEESAW or the school email address to request a personal call off Mrs Jones or I, for us to answer any queries. We will also be publishing a 'Frequently asked questions' correspondence on Monday to help parents/guardians so if you have any questions you would like to ask, please email school (mailbox@tanyfron-pri.wrexham.sch.uk) before **5pm on Sunday 7th June** so answers can be formulated for Monday morning.

I appreciate this letter brings a certain degree of formality and reality to the current situation, hence my decision to try to provide you with as long a timescale as possible. I urge parents/guardians to think carefully about their decision as this way of working may very well continue into the Autumn term but there is also the need to think about the current lockdown restrictions.

Please keep safe and have a restful weekend.

Yours sincerely



Mr D. Lloyd
Headteacher

Summary of and link to The Education Minister's announcement 03/06/20

Check in, Catch Up, Prepare for Summer and September". <https://gov.wales/check-catch-prepare-summer-and-september-all-schools-wales-enter-next-phase>

Context –

- Schools will start the next phase on 29 June, with the term extended by a week, therefore ending on 24th July.
- Autumn half-term break will be expanded to two weeks.
- Childcare providers will also increase the numbers of children in attendance from 29th June.

How –

- In each school there will be a phased approach.
- Year groups will be split into cohorts with staggered starts, lessons and breaks.
- It is expected that this will mean, at most, a third of pupils present at any one time, though schools may need time to reach this level of operation.
- Much smaller classes will provide secure dedicated time with teachers and classmates.
- This time will include online and personalised classroom experience, getting children and teachers ready for a similar experience in September.

Why –

- We are creating the opportunity for children to Check in, Catch Up and Prepare before the start of September.
- Since the decision to close schools for statutory provision, our understanding of the virus and its longer-term impacts has continued to develop.
- We know that we are going to have to live with it for some time.
- We know that it will remain our biggest challenge for the foreseeable future.
- We know that the classroom experience will be different for a long time to come.

Next Steps –

- Next week, the Welsh Government will publish guidance to support childcare, schools, as well as further and higher education institutions.
- This will include information on managing their facilities and logistical arrangements, including buildings, resources, cleaning and transport.