



## YSGOL DYFFRYN CONWY

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Dear Parents/Guardians,

As we move on in our planning, I am keen to offer you an update on the school's preparations, as we work on delivering the Welsh Government's plans to re-open our doors for our learners on 29/06/20. A great deal of work is being done by the school to ensure that learners and staff can return safely and happily. As you can imagine, the challenge is huge and the time is limited, but I can assure you that the school will be open and the team at Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy is looking forward to welcoming the learners back, adhering to Welsh Government guidance. If you had not responded to our questionnaire on returning to school or were unsure about whether to send your child back to school, you will have received a letter from us in the post over the past few days. Please contact us if you have not already done so to confirm.

If you have already confirmed by questionnaire or following correspondence from us that your child will not be attending when we re-open, or that your child will be attending, a separate letter is on its way to you.

In the meantime, below is some information that may be of interest to you. You may also find the following link to Conwy's video on re-opening schools helpful:

<https://youtu.be/HYmWow8KogE>

We will let you know when the full list of questions and answers for parents/carers in Conwy has gone live on Conwy's website.

In this update I would like to give you an outline of our arrangements at Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy. But before I go into detail, I would like to emphasise that re-opening will not represent a return to ordinary school life, and the experience will be very different from what we are used to. This period is an opportunity for us to re-engage with our learners and develop good practice for the month of September. Naturally, some of you will expect precise detail and answers that I do not have at the moment, but as a school we will communicate with you and the learners between now and the 29th of June giving you updates.

We are working in a completely unprecedented period and I must warn that arrangements can change again during the next period as national guidance is changing from day to day.

Therefore, in this correspondence, it is my intention to clarify the initial position of the school and to engage with you again in a variety of ways to add detail over the next week. This is therefore structured as a series of relevant questions regarding our reopening:

### What are the reopening arrangements at Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy in terms of hours and days?

- At present we foresee that Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy will be open for educational purposes to most pupils for four days a week. This is to provide sufficient time for the creation of a window of 72 hours where any transfer of a virus ceases, and gives staff dedicated time to focus on the aspects of distance learning which will continue to be at the heart of our provision.
- For the three weeks commencing June 29th, pupils will be coming to the school for one day per week. We



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have split the following year groups in two – years, 7, 8, 9 and 10 and will be rotating two groups daily. The provision for year 12 is a little different, beginning with a focus on their next pathway and UCAS.

- The school day for the learners will begin at 9:30 with a staggered start for buses (9.30am), pupils arriving by car with a parent (9.45 – 10am) and pupils arriving with parents/siblings in small family only groups between 10-10.15am. We will likewise be operating a staggered finish beginning with pupils who will be travelling from school by bus from 2.30pm, parent pick ups by car (2.45-3pm) and after that, pupils leaving by foot/bike, again in small family groups only. Congregating in bigger groups on the way to or from school is actively discouraged to ensure that social distancing is maintained.
- Distance learning provision will continue during this period, as we move to develop the blended learning that will now be central to our offer, combining face-to-face learning with distance learning. However, the amount of subjects for each week will be reduced to two core subjects (literacy and numeracy) a week for years 7-10, along with option subject work for years 9 and 10 over the period and projects in combined subjects (humanities, arts, technology) for years 7 and 8. This will help both pupils and staff maintain a balance between the learning on site and distance learning.

### **How will it be for a child at Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy during this period?**

- Classrooms have been adapted to fully respect the 2 metre distance rule. The capacity of the rooms used varies from 6 to 8 pupils.
- A pupil will stay in the same room all day for the learning elements. Learners will also return to the same room for each of their days at school.
- There will be a dedicated route for pupils to enter and exit the building through the main leisure centre entrance and we will be using different teaching zones around the room to limit access to different areas and facilitate access to the outdoor areas during the day.
- Each zone has specific toilets within the area used. Pupils will be required to wash their hands as they enter and exit the site as well as being actively encouraged to wash their hands frequently over the course of the day. There will be purposeful breaks during the day for toilet breaks by room. There will be a strong emphasis as learners arrive and leave the site on social distancing, and safe movement on site.
- A team of staff are considering a number of aspects in shaping pupils' groups. The process of planning the groups is complex and, as a result, we are asking for your support by asking you not to make applications for your child to be in groups with other specific learners. For years 7-9 however, these groups are generally based around form groups. For year 10 they are based around core subject groups.
- The main focus will be on realising the Welsh Government's aspiration to 'Check in, Catch Up, Prepare for summer and September'; prioritising the well-being of our learners and supporting them to undertake effectively in the blended learning and responding to feedback from pupil questionnaires. An outdoor activity is planned, weather permitting, within the programme of the day.

### **What are the arrangements for eating in school?**

- We ask that pupils bring a packed lunch and drinks with them to school. Where this is not possible, a packed lunch can be purchased from the canteen. Designated eating areas will be set up in the hall and canteen for learners to eat their lunches on rotation. These will be cleaned after each staggered lunch break. The lunch break for each group will be condensed to allow for all groups to follow social distancing arrangements and to support the staggered start and finish times of the day. Hand washing arrangements before, and after, eating will be operational. The water fountains in school will of course not be operational because of the risk of contamination, and so pupils are advised to bring water in a bottle to school.



### **What day did transport arrangements allow my child to get to school?**

- In order to reduce the risk of infection, and in line with the Welsh Government's encouragement, we suggest that parents bring their children to school and not use school transport if possible. However, if you completed our questionnaire and noted that your child used school transport, transport has been requested.

- Where parents noted that they were able to or wanted to bring their child to school by car, transport arrangements have not been made. We will be operating a bus queueing system on entry to site and pupils will remain on the buses until asked to disembark by the school's main reception. The same arrangement will be in place for pupil drop off by car. We ask that only your child leaves your vehicle and the drop off point again will be outside the main entrance with a request to remain in the car until asked to join the queue to enter the building. Pupils walking/cycling to school will also need to come to the main entrance, not the usual route to the electronic side gates. They are asked to keep a distance between themselves on the journey to school, including along Nebo Road and along the path by the school driveway.

- For pupils using school transport, the service will be very different in terms of numbers on buses in order to maintain social distance with a maximum of 13 pupils on a 70 seater bus for example. Taxi service will not be operational.

- When school transport is used, pupils will be expected to adhere to social distance arrangements at bus stops, which is the responsibility of parents. In addition, seating plans will be implemented for school transport, (to facilitate the first on – and last off) and pupils will only be expected to sit in their designated seats. Failure to do so can lead to the loss of their place. There will be a specific system as learners arrive and leave school with staff overseeing these arrangements.

### **Will there be additional provision for Bl.10 and 12 pupils as they are in the middle of examination courses?**

- During the initial phases of the school, Year 10 and 12 will focus on core subjects and well-being aspects and will work on ensuring engagement with the blended learning. In the case of Year 12 there will also be a dedicated career support programme towards UCAS.

- It would be very difficult to expect year 10 and 12 learners to begin immediately on formal work in their selected subject areas. Although we have not received details of the changes to GCSE and A level courses, we are aware that the WJEC and Qualifications Wales are considering adaptations to the courses to ensure that they are sustainable and reasonable for learners to achieve. We will contact you immediately when we get those details – and we press for the information on a daily basis. This means that the school is currently unable to plan the learning of new content until there is further guidance from WJEC. We hope to be able to provide some subject input for year 10 in the third week but this is unlikely to be in all their option subjects on site and will be around helping to prepare for September. For year 12 our aim is for pupils to access support in their chosen subjects on site, however managing this within the constraints of social mixing and infection control regulations is a challenge.

### **What will be expected in terms of school uniforms during this period?**

- We understand that pupils may well have grown out of their school uniforms over the period since the school closed and that the purchase of a new uniform is extremely difficult at this time. We would, however ask that pupils wear their school jumpers where possible along with clothes that are comfortable, suitable for some outdoor wear and easy to wash after every visit to school. We ask for the co-operation and support of parents to ensure appropriate attire during this time - no cropped tops, very short shorts or skirts, nor low cut tops will be permitted.

### **I have not registered my child to return on the 29th. Am I allowed to change my mind?**



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- Only those children who are registered to return to school will be allowed to attend because there will not be enough staff or equipped rooms to serve unregistered pupils safely. Therefore will not be able to accept any learner at the school who is not officially registered. We have been in contact with parents who were uncertain when they completed the questionnaire or who have not responded. If we have not heard from you by Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June, we will not be able to make arrangements for your child to attend.

- If you change your mind and want to register your child to return to school that is perfectly acceptable – BUT you must contact us directly. This will be done by e-mailing Mr Roger Beech, (assistant head) at: cyff@dyffrynconwy.conwy.sch.uk or phoning the main reception 01492 642800. We will expect a full week's notice before your child can return, so that the school can adapt our provision safely and sessions may be more limited than the full provision above.

### **Are there other health and safety considerations?**

- No learner should consider coming to school if they feel unwell during this period. Further information regarding this is included in the pupil induction booklet. This includes a list of questions to consider before you send your child to school.

- An area will be specifically allocated to any learner who would feel unwell during the school day. If your child feels unwell during the school day, you will be contacted urgently and asked to come and collect your child as soon as is possible from the school.

Pupils should not bring in any additional equipment or belongings with them to school. This includes a mobile phone – these should be kept at home. The only items pupils should bring to school is a packed lunch and water. Equipment of working in class will be provided on a pupil's first visit back to school and will be required for their return visits during the following period.

- Personal Protective equipment (PPE) will be available to all staff who provide first aid.

- The school's procedures for pupil illness, fire emergency and pupil behaviour have been modified to reflect the new re-opening requirements. Pupils will be expected to follow the instructions from their teachers and around the site to ensure that they maintain a social distance. Where pupils do not adhere to these expectations, arrangements will be made for them to go home.

I apologise that this time has passed since our last correspondence and that there is a lot of detail in this letter. However, it is important information that we need to share with you. All the answers you need may not be in this letter, but it is part of communicating where we are in our plans and arrangements with you. We are also planning to forward the following information to you over the week too:

- A pupil induction booklet to help with understanding some of the information shared above;
- A pupils invitation with confirmation of when your child will be able to come into school;
- A video of the school site with information about new entry points, signage and the one way system to help your child prepare to return.

I have already emphasised that we are currently operating in unprecedented conditions and there is a daily possibility that the arrangements have to change as a result of changes in national or regional guidance. Once again I would like to thank you for your support and patience during this period. I would like to thank the staff who are currently working hard to implement the plan for re-opening the school and who are looking forward to seeing our pupils again during the re-opening period. The arrangements outlined in this letter are essential to make sure that we do so responsibly and safely.

Yours sincerely, Miss Elan Davies, Pennaeth/Head.



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