



3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2021

Dear all parents and carers

I do hope you have kept as well as possible and have managed to cope with the current restrictions we are all under during this lockdown. Hopefully this will be the last lockdown and we can return to a much more normal way of life in the not too distant future.

Today, the Minister for Education made the formal announcement that secondary schools in Wales will begin to reopen to pupils and students from the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Alongside this information on reopening, we have also received the latest operational guidance from Welsh Government on how to reopen as safely as possible.

I am sure lots of parents and learners have many questions and I will answer them fully over the next few days once we have worked through the latest guidance. I will write again to you all with clear plans on how the school will be set up, how we will be ready for our students and pupils return and any changes that will impact how the school will operate. Once our plans are in place we will communicate the latest changes to our risk assessments and operating procedures.

**Please find a list of key pieces of information below which will help you understand the latest announcement from Welsh Government on reopening:**

- **All pupils and students in years 11 and 13 are to return to school on the week beginning 15<sup>th</sup> March.** These classes are exam classes and they need as much time in school as we can manage so that they can gain the highest grades possible. *Further detail on their return will be sent out this week.*
- **Some pupils and students in years 10 and 12 will begin to return to school on the week beginning 15<sup>th</sup> March.** Some of these classes have exams this year and need as much time in school as we can manage so that they can gain the highest grades that they are capable of. *The days these year groups will return will be decided and communicated as soon as possible.*
- **All other year groups will be able to access school for some catch up days** before we break up for Easter on the 26<sup>th</sup> March. *The rota of days these year groups will return will be decided and communicated as soon as possible.*
- **Online learning will still take place for pupils and students working from home** whilst the school transitions and returns to full capacity.
- **Our in -school hub provision will still continue for eligible pupils.**

The logistics and timings will be communicated with parents and carers as soon as we have had further advice from Welsh Government and DCC.

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There have also been developments from Welsh Government on how to organise the school safely as pupils and staff return to class. I have listed the main changes to the guidance from Welsh Government below and included what this means for our learners:

- In secondary settings and colleges **face coverings should be worn in all communal areas and in the classroom** where it's not possible to socially distance.  
*This change now means all pupils and students must wear face coverings in classrooms during lessons as it is impossible to socially distance in our school. The only exception to this is if learners have a medical exemption.*
- **Twice weekly testing** will be available for year 10 learners and above in schools and colleges.  
*This change means that all pupils and students in years 10, 11, 12 and 13 will be tested for COVID-19 using lateral flow asymptomatic test kits. This testing will begin when their year group returns to school for face to face lessons. The logistics and procedure for the administering of these tests is yet to be shared with schools.*

I will write again as soon as possible to inform you of the plans for the return of each year group and the arrangements on how we will conduct the testing of pupils and students. I will also update all parents on any further guidance we receive. As always, please contact the school if you have any questions about this latest announcement.

As pupils return, we will continue to be a safe, protective environment for all members of our community.

Best wishes and continue to follow the latest government advice

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Foley'.

**Neil Foley - B.Sc. MA.**  
Pennaeth Headteacher