



St Martin's School

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Headteacher Prifathro: Mr. L. Jarvis

13 August 2020

Dear parent/Guardian,

Following on from my letter to you in July. I write once again to give further detailed information on our planned full reopening of the school by the 14th of September.

With reference to the guidance relating to a return of 100% of learners to schools by the 14th of September in Wales, the operations below will be in place and continually reviewed as we move through the days and weeks that follow and in light of any new guidance issued to us or potential spread of the virus.

I have tried to keep this as brief as possible and relevant to our school setting but if you wish to read the full guidance from WG for your information this can be found via this link

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/operational-guidance-for-schools-and-settings-from-the-autumn-term.pdf>

The Welsh Technical Advisory Group (TAG), which provides scientific and technical advice to Government during emergencies, recommends that schools “plan to open in September with 100% of pupils physically present on school sites, subject to a continuing, steady decline in the presence of COVID-19 in the community.”

Although it is not possible to ensure a totally risk-free environment, the Office of National Statistics’ analysis on coronavirus (COVID-19) related deaths linked to occupations suggests that staff in educational settings tend not to be at any greater risk from the disease than many other occupations. There is no evidence that children transmit the disease any more than adults. There is currently a very low prevalence of positive tests among education workers at 3.8% cumulative, among the lowest rates of critical workers.

Taking into account the improved situation we now find ourselves in, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. Being out of school is detrimental for children’s cognitive and academic development and their health and well-being, particularly for disadvantaged children; and, can have an impact both in the short and longer term. We know that lower academic achievement also translates into long-term economic costs. We also know that school closures have affected some families’ ability to work. By getting our learners back into school as quickly and as safely as possible will bring positive benefits on a number of fronts not least their mental and emotional wellbeing.

There will be a period of flexibility in recognition that schools may want to focus on priority year groups such as Years 7, 12, 13

From the second week of term it is expected that schools and settings will need to maximise the number of learners in attendance leading to a full return on the 14 September when school attendance will be compulsory for all pupils.

We will continue to monitor the situation carefully and every school will also need to plan for the possibility of a local lockdown and how they will ensure continuity of education within a broader framework of local restrictions.

(Extracted from WG guidance)

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Raising Standards –



Following Public Health Wales advice to minimise COVID-19 risks we will do all that we are able to, in trying to keep learners and staff safe at school and reduce the potential for them to contract the virus. We have assessed risks as they currently stand and put in place proportionate control measures where we can.

The measures we have undertaken following the guidance from Welsh government includes:

- a requirement that people who are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 stay at home
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene including ventilation
- continuation of increased cleaning arrangements
- active engagement with Test, Trace, Protect
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.

Prevention

In an attempt to prevent the spread of the virus amongst our school population and within the parameters of the guidance, we have implemented a range of strategies.

Reducing contact between staff and learners

WG guidance states-*How contacts are reduced will depend on the school's circumstances*

Where possible we will attempt to reduce contact between different groups of learners at key times including movement into, out of and around school site.

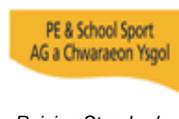
Entry and exit

WG guidance states-Where possible, schools should consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school. Staggered start and finish times should not reduce the amount of overall teaching time.

1. Controlled entry and exit from school will operate for all year groups.
2. The school day will operate as outlined in the chart below for the first half term and will be under constant review.
3. Year groups will use separate entrance and exit routes and we will operate different finish times but without reducing lesson time.
4. No pupil is permitted to be on site before their allocated entry slot and once on site not to enter buildings until the start time of their lesson time.
5. By filtering learners in, we will be able to ensure that the majority sanitise on entry.
6. It will be very challenging to manage late arrivals as staff supporting safe entry to school will be required to undertake cleaning procedures once lessons start at 8.30 when our school gates will be secured, therefore it is vital for learners to arrive on time.

Year group	Entry point	Time	Lesson 1 8.30-9.40	Lesson 2 9.40-10.40	Lesson 3 10.40-11.50	Lesson 4 11.50-12.50	Lesson 5 12.50-1.50	Staggered exit 1.50-2.15
Year 7	Hillside	8.15-8.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a learner requires the toilet during a lesson they will be permitted to do so. 					15 onwards the site staff

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Year 8	Hillside	8.15-8.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lesson 1 and lesson 3 are longer to enable learners to have an in class break with refreshments As there are no catering facilities running in caerphilly schools for the first half term we have slotted lunch onto the end of the day to enable learners to be home for lunchtime. 	will clean and prepare the site for the next day.
Year 9	Rector y	8.15-8.30		
Year 10	Rector y	8.15-8.30		
Year 11	Rector y	8.15-8.30		
Year 12/13				

WG guidance states-The present advice is that it is not necessary to screen temperatures. Learners' parents/carers can check for signs of a high temperature. *But that* Staff should of course be vigilant for changes to learners' temperatures and signs of fever.

- Temperature checks will be in operation alongside a simple question and answer screening process as we believe this is the most appropriate way in which our staff can be vigilant about a child's temperature or sign of fever and fulfil the guidance above.

Contact groups

WG guidance states-Minimise contact between individuals wherever possible. For younger learners the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older learners it will be on distancing. Schools must consider how to best implement this and do everything possible within their own context to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. It is acknowledged, however, that schools will have constraints relating to buildings and staffing resources and an element of flexibility may be needed in order that children and accommodated in this return to school. 10 The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between learners and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate and through maintaining distance between individuals. Both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the: learners' ability to distance layout of the school feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum (especially at secondary schools).

It is likely that for younger learners the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older learners it will be on social distancing.

For learners old enough, they should be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff where possible.

- Contact groups will be based on year groups-meaning that they will mainly, not interact outside of their contact group. This will also help to support the TTT system if any outbreak occurs.

WG guidance states-All teachers and staff can operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable.

- All classrooms where possible will be reorganised so that desks face front to help facilitate learners not facing each other

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Raising Standards –

- Staff will maintain 2 metres social distancing from learners and colleagues at all times whilst around the school and in the classroom. We have marked all classrooms so that the teacher remains within their boundary markers at all times.
- All supplementary furniture except desks and chairs will be removed from classrooms.

Corridors

- Corridors will be supervised by senior staff, site management team and teachers
- Corridor changeover must be swift and silent to reduce the potential spray of droplets from shouting and conversation whilst passing in the corridors. We have marked routes through the school and will ensure all learners are aware of the necessity of this.
- It is not possible to stagger entry and exit to classrooms and operate a broad balanced full curriculum, but by retaining our embedded processes of teachers standing at the door exiting learners a desk at a time and ensuring the next class is entering the room in an orderly manner (2metres apart where possible) and sanitising on entry we will minimise mixing of contact groups for long periods of time.
- We have removed lesson bells so that teachers can scan the corridor and use their judgement on how many learners to release at any one time or how quickly they need to get a class in if they see a potential build up in the corridors.
- There will be no requirement to line classes up outside rooms
- Learners should aim to fill up from the back of the class to avoid close interactions where possible.
- We will not be enforcing seating plans and leave this to teacher discretion where they seat the learners.

Classrooms

WG Guidance states-*It is strong public health advice that staff in secondary schools maintain distance from their learners, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible. Ideally, adults should maintain a 2 metre distance from each other, and from learners. Extract from WG guidance*

- All learners will need to sanitise on entry to classrooms and exit from classrooms
- Whilst in classrooms the teacher is responsible for maintaining a 2 metre distance from learners at all times and providing good ventilation.

WG Guidance states-Schools should make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. That should include seating learners side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space.

- All desks where possible will be forward facing and learners will be advised not to talk to others within the class or turn to face them at any time
- All furniture except desks and chairs will be removed from classrooms.

Reinforcing key messages

- Posters and signage will be present throughout the school and in key areas to remind learners and staff to adhere to the guidelines
- Health and safety briefings will be held with all learners and staff at the start of term.

Interactions with colleagues

This presents one of the highest risks at present to transferring the virus.

- Staff should have no physical contact with each other and maintain a 2 metre distance wherever possible whilst also minimising the interactions they have with their colleagues.
- Car sharing should be avoided when journeying to school for learners and staff where possible.

Staff meetings

- All staff training and meetings will be held using electronic means

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Raising Standards –



Visitors to site

- No visitors will be permitted on school site for the first half term.
- No home visits will be in operation by our wellbeing team for the first half term.

Access to administrative team

- No access by learners, parents or staff to the administrative block will be permitted during the first half term any communication with the team will need to be via email or telephone.

Staff Illness

WG guidance states- Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school. Under no circumstances should learners or staff attend school settings 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.

- Staff and learners who are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 will stay at home for 7 days.
- Staff and learners who live in a household with someone who has symptoms or have been tested for the virus in the past 14 days should not attend school

Cover for absent staff

- We will not be having cover teachers on site for the first half term. The school hall and Bistro is set up for classes needing supervision when a member of staff or multiple members of staff are absent from work. The senior team will supervise the learners to continue with the work set for their lesson within their contact groups.

Illness during the school day

WG guidance states- Those showing symptoms should be kept separate until they can be collected and taken home. Ideally, this should be in a separate room, supervised at a distance of two metres where possible, but recognising this may not be possible with younger learners.

- We will continue to operate our medical isolation base near school reception. If a learner becomes ill with symptoms during the school they will be taken directly to this area and need to be collected quickly by parents/guardian.
- The required isolation period will then need to be followed

Response to any infection

WG guidance states- Engage with the Test, Trace, Protect strategy. Manage confirmed cases of COVID-19 among the school community and contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice.

- All staff, learners and their families must actively engage with Test, Trace and protect.

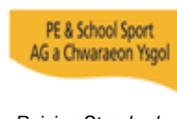
Cleaning and good hygiene in the classroom and around the school

WG guidance states- Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual. *Schools supported by their local authorities must ensure that learners clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating. Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future.*

Cleanliness

- Robust hand washing must be adhered to by staff and learners
- Learners must sanitise on entry to school and upon entry and exit from classrooms

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Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach. Continue enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach. Where necessary, in specific circumstances, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Where possible ensure appropriate ventilation.

- Respiratory hygiene is essential at all times-this includes good ventilation. Where possible windows and doors will be open.
- We will not be using air conditioning and/or blow fans

Cleaning of school site

- The enhanced cleaning regime will continue to operate across the school. Teaching staff will be responsible for ensuring touch surfaces are sanitised hourly.
- There is a system in operation for immediate notification of any cleaning concerns to our site manager.

WG guidance states-Increased cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach.

Points to consider and implement include: putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes:

1. more frequent cleaning of rooms/shared areas after they have been used by different groups
2. frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal where possible, providing separate toilets for different contact groups. Where this is not possible, using hand sanitiser before entering the toilet and ensuring toilets are cleaned regularly will help. Learners must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet.

- Our strict enhanced cleaning regime will remain in place utilising the site staff and catering team to add capacity during the first half term and until catering provision is operational. A team of 18 staff will clean and disinfect constantly throughout the day and disinfect the entire school at the end of each day.
- If learners or staff have tissues they should not dispose of these in school bins but flush them in the toilet or seal them in a plastic bag and put them in their school bag
- We do not have sufficient toilets to provide separate ones for each contact group but will have a full time cleaner for each of the toilet blocks and will operate a strict two person entry only at any one time.
- Posters will be in place to encourage learners to wash their hands.

Behaviour

- It is imperative that learners follow all of our school rules to enable us to keep them and others safe. We will not accommodate learners on site whose behaviour endangers the lives of others.

Assemblies

WG Guidance states-Contact groups should be kept apart where possible, meaning that schools should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship **with more than one group.**

Assemblies will continue as learners will be within their contact group. These will be vital to maintain our culture and reinforce key health and safety messages. These will take place in the school hall following the published rota

- The hall will be set up facing front and learners will be two metres away from staff at all times.

Breaks and lunches

- Catering will not operate for the first half term and therefore all learners will need to bring some light refreshments with them to school to consume in class during the allocated slots.

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- Families of those eligible for free school meals will continue to have these provided to them by the local authority.

PPE & uniform

WG Guidance states-Nonmedical face coverings are recommended where social distancing cannot be maintained. They are not a replacement for far more effective measures such as social distancing and hand hygiene.

- PPE is not compulsory for standard daily work.
- Staff will wear PPE in lessons and whilst around the school. Staff have visors and clear masks to ensure that we are able to still communicate effectively for learners who have hearing impairments.
- Learners can wear face coverings. 87% of parents have indicated that they would like their child to wear a mask. They will not be challenged to remove these if they wish to do so.
- Full school uniform will be in place but cannot be purchased from the school-information has gone out to all parents regarding purchase of items.
- Face coverings worn into school on public transport must be removed prior to entry due to the risk of bringing the virus into the school population on face coverings and clean coverings used to replace these where desired.
- Fresh face coverings can be provided to learners on entry to the site if they wish to use these.

Equipment

WG Guidance states-It is still recommended that learners limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, bags, hats, coats, books, stationery and mobile phones. Learners and staff can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided, especially where this does not contribute to learners' education and development.

- Learners and staff must have their own basic equipment and must not share
- Equipment that is not basic and is to be shared for example mini whiteboards, computers or sports equipment must be fully sanitised before and after use and ideally not shared during the course of the lesson. Where items are to be used by different contact groups i.e year groups this needs to be fully sanitised or left for 48 hours and 72 hours if plastic
- Learners are able to take books home and teachers are also.

Marking and assessment

- We will revert to our standard marking and assessment policy now that we are delivering face to face lessons. This is available on our school website.

Health and safety

Any concerns relating to health and safety in any form should be raised with the schools health and safety representative (Mrs Banks) Site manager (Mrs Davies) or myself so that we can action any adjustments swiftly.

A reminder of our timetable from the 1st September to 14th Week 1 1st September onwards

Tuesday 1st	Year 6 into 7 transition
Wednesday 2nd	Year 6 into 7 transition
Thursday 3rd	Year 6 into 7 transition & Year 8

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Raising Standards –



Friday 4th	Year 6 into 7 transition & Year 8
Monday 7th	Repurposing day 1-Staff prepare their classrooms with site staff and organise any additional resources
Tuesday 8th	Repurposing day 2-Staff prepare their classrooms with site staff and organise any additional resources
Wednesday 9th	Year 7, 8 12 & 13
Thursday 10th	7, 8, 9 12, 13
Friday 11th	7, 8, 9 10, 11,12 13
Monday 14th	All year groups in

I thank you once again for your support in ensuring your child is fully prepared for a return to school in September.

Please use the information above to speak with them and settle any queries that they may have. The above information may change from time to time as the dynamic situation within the country does. This may be in relation to the spread or eradication of the virus or new scientific advice that is shared with us. We will endeavour to update you as we work within these guidelines and adjust our operational procedures as we work in this new reality.

Please impress upon your child how important it is to follow the rules within the school as their lives and that of their staff and our community depends upon this.

I wish you all the very best and thank you for the immense support we have had as a school whilst working through this very difficult situation. The safety of our staff and your children is the most important factor for us and I look forward to working through this with you in September.

We cannot wait to see our school full once again and staff and learners reunited to continue their educational journey.

Kind regards and stay safe

Yours sincerely



Mr L Jarvis
Headteacher

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