



# St Martin's School

**Ysgol Martin Sant**

Hillside, Caerphilly CF83 1UW

Tel. Ffôn: 029 20 858050

Fax. Ffacs: 029 20 858051

E-mail E-bost: [reception@stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk](mailto:reception@stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk)

Website Safle wê: [stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk](http://stmartins.caerphilly.sch.uk)

Headteacher Prifathro: Mr. L. Jarvis

30 November 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you and your families are well during this terrible time that we are living through.

I write to you today to share with you the plans that we are putting in place to further reduce the risk of families having to isolate over the Christmas period and therefore not see loved ones and celebrate together.

Over the last few weeks, I have had a great deal of parental requests to remove their children from school during the last week of term in order to undertake a 'mini family fire break isolation', in the hope that their families will remain virus free over the Christmas period and therefore they can be confident that when they meet up with grandparents and their extended family they will reduce the risk to them.

By self isolating now the hope is that there will be less need to self isolate over the Christmas period and that there will be fewer cases of children identified as close contact with a positive case from school.

I have considered these requests carefully and have sought to find if this is a view shared by more parents. Having undertaken a survey of parents' views, it is clear that it is. Thank you to the parents that responded to our survey on this matter of which 68% stated that they intended to keep their children home during the last week of the Christmas term in order to reduce the risk of contracting the virus and therefore contaminating their family.

This survey result has been reflected upon and discussed intensely, as our desire is always to sustain learning for as long a period as we can in school safely. We had been hopeful that the Welsh government would have taken a proactive approach and allowed schools to deliver distance learning during this final week, so that we could meet parents' requests to keep their children safe at home whilst still continuing their education.

To date, unfortunately our request for this to happen has not been supported by the government and they have made it clear in recent briefings of their desire to keep schools open.

At St Martins, we are feeling the impact of the ever rising positive cases within our community and Wales as a whole. We currently have two year groups with positive cases who are self isolating for 14 days and a large number awaiting test results.

Following my consultation with parents, I have also consulted staff and discussed this matter with the local authority and the chair of governors.

In these discussions we have looked at three options;

- Close the school on health and safety grounds.
- Close to learners and deliver lessons online.
- Move our inset days from the summer to the end of this term.

**Learning Together, Achieving Forever    Dysgu ynghyd, cyflawni o hyd**

Balancing these options carefully I have taken the decision at this time to move our school inset days planned for the summer term to the end of this term and therefore close to pupils from the 10th of December.

By taking this decisive action, I am able to support the majority of families who would welcome an early closure and in turn add the opportunity for families to reduce their contacts on the run up to the Christmas break and therefore more safely have family gatherings, visit grandparents and see extended families at this important time of the year.

I believe that this decision is the right one for the majority of our families and our learners and will add an additional level of flexibility in how you manage the risk of this terrible virus upon your families.

I thank you for the support you have shown the school throughout this pandemic. It has been overwhelming, and your continued support on this matter as we try to keep everyone as safe as we can.

Please stay safe

Yours sincerely



Mr L Jarvis  
Headteacher