Dear Parent/Carer

The last few months have created enormous challenges for all of us. We recognise that some families and children have found lockdown very hard. We are aware that some of you, sadly, have suffered personal loss, and others have come across financial hardship. We have all experienced an unprecedented level of change and uncertainty.

Since 20th March, we have endeavoured to home school all of our pupils in a way never previously attempted. Allied to this, we have continued to offer a range of pastoral care and support as appropriate.

Last week the Education Minister announced that, as of 29th June, schools would re-open if the Government considers that it is safe to do so. In fact, since 20th March, the school has not really closed. In addition to delivering home learning, staff have been attending the hub to enable Key Workers to deliver front line services and much of our routine school business has continued. However, from 29th June pupils may be allowed to return to school. In addition to this return, Welsh Government announced that the summer term will be extended until 27th July and that October half term will be a two-week break. We are awaiting information regarding the specific dates surrounding this.

The Welsh Government has made it very clear that it is a matter of personal choice for parents and carers as to whether to send your child back to school. There will be no issuing of any fines should you decide to keep your child at home. Please do not feel obliged to send your son or daughter to school at this stage. If your child is clinically extremely vulnerable, or living with someone who is in this group, they should not come back to school and should continue home learning. If your child is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically *extremely* vulnerable), you should follow medical advice to decide if they should come back to school.

It has been made very clear that home learning will remain the primary source of education for pupils. Our key focus for a return to school will be to provide our pupils with an opportunity for some direct contact prior to the summer holidays and to prepare students for similar experiences in the Autumn term.

I am sure that, like us, you will have many questions and concerns about the re-opening of our school. I can assure you that at every stage of our thinking, planning and decision making, your child’s welfare and safety has been paramount as well as that of our staff.

Welsh Government has been very clear that schools must remain mindful of their own individual context whilst planning to re-open to ensure that they are able to deliver what is both safe and achievable. Those of you who have visited the school over the years are aware that it is predominantly a 1960’s build on a very small site. After much thought and study of Welsh Government guidance, we have decided to open the school in a gradual, responsible way, which will allow us to monitor and manage the wealth of complex health and safety requirements, to take in to account staffing capacity and to continue our support for Key Workers.

From 29th June in the first week, school will be open to ***one year group per day***.

***Year 7 – Monday***

***Year 8 – Tuesday***

***Year 9 – Wednesday***

***Year 10 – Thursday***

***Year 12 – Friday***

However, to adhere to the strict health and safety guidance, this will only be for half days with one half of Year 7 attending in the morning and the other half of Year 7 attending in the afternoon. This will be repeated throughout the week for the other year groups. Pupils will spend 2.5 hours on the school site working in a ‘bubble’ and what we mean by this is that a group of staff will work with each half year group on a weekly rota. Class sizes will be significantly reduced, and cleaning provision will be enhanced. There will be no school canteen operating and therefore the morning session will finish before lunch and the afternoon session will start after lunch. Classrooms will be rearranged to take account of social distancing and new protocols and procedures will be clarified for pupils as we work hard to abide by all health and safety guidance. This level of provision will be monitored and reviewed throughout the remainder of the summer term.

Add timings…………

Once again, can I reiterate that home schooling will continue and during this period you will find us using ever more sophisticated approaches in our delivery.

For the remainder of this term, we will not expect pupils to be in school uniform but to wear something appropriate for the school day. This will provide you with the opportunity to wash items of clothing regularly. Similarly, our dress code for staff will be relaxed for the same reason. The wearing of masks is optional for both staff and pupils.

We would politely request that you avoid turning up to school unannounced and to remain mindful of social distancing measures at all times, should you have a meeting in school. There will be no after school activities or games during this period.

I appreciate you will have many thoughts and questions over the coming weeks and we will endeavour to answer as many as we can.

Please continue to use our website and follow our Twitter page for further updates and information.

Yours sincerely

S M JONES

Headteacher