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23rd July, 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach the end of term, I would like to share an outline of our plans for the next academic year.

What has Welsh Government decided about reopening schools?

You are probably aware by now that Welsh Government has decided that all schools in Wales will be open to all pupils from 14th September. Between Thursday 3rd and Friday 11th September, secondary schools will take a staggered approach to welcoming pupils back on site. This decision remains under continual review by the Welsh Government and may be subject to change in response to the rate of Covid-19 infection.



We have made preparations for your child's return in accordance with the Government's operational and learning guidance. These documents can be read via the following links:

Operational Guidance:

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

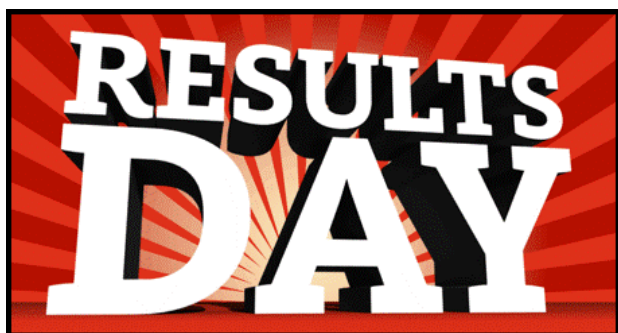
Learning Guidance:

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

Our reopening plans will be revised over the summer holidays to take into account any alterations that are published in August. I will write to you again soon after the GCSE results day with detailed information about September. In the meantime, please find below an outline of our plans, the rationale and additional information that you may find helpful.



What is happening on results day?



A-Level and GCSE results days are going ahead on the original release dates:

- **A-Levels results** will be distributed on **Thursday 13th August** – **Year 13** from 9am and **Year 12** from 11am
- **GCSE results** will be distributed on **Thursday 20th August** – **Year 11** from 9am

This year, schools have faced a difficult decision about whether or not to invite students in to collect their results in person, as we normally would.

On the one hand, it will be more important than ever this year to be able to congratulate students on their achievements, to console those who haven't achieved the results they were hoping for, and to advise them on next steps.

On the other hand, we are obviously concerned about bringing together large groups of young people, many of whom are likely to be emotional and so will find social distancing even more challenging than usual.

We have decided to offer students the choice. They can either come to collect their results in person, or they can have their results sent to them electronically.

Those who attend in person will be able to access on site one-to-one support from teaching staff. For example, Year 13 students may need support with navigating their way through the clearing process to gain a spot on the just the right course at their preferred university. Similarly, Year 11 students may need guidance on Sixth Form, vocational college routes or employment and training opportunities. Mrs Taylor will write prior to results day to explain how we intend to keep these students safe when they come on site.

Those students who choose not to attend in person can still access the support they need over the phone from specialist staff who will be on hand to help. They are also welcome to come into school during the early afternoon.

What are the new 2020 -2021 term dates?

Following Welsh Government's decision to extend the summer term by one week, there has been one important change to the autumn term dates. The October half term has been extended by one week and will now start on Monday 19th October.

Autumn Term

- September start dates vary for each year group (see below) - Friday 18th December
- Half Term - **Monday 19th October** - Friday 30th October



Spring Term

- Tuesday 5th January - Friday 26th March
- Half Term - Monday 15th February - Friday 19th February

Summer Term

- Tuesday 13th April - Friday 16th July
- Half Term - Monday 31st May - Friday 4th June

When is the school reopening for my child in September?

Powys Local Authority have decided that pupils in all schools will return to school between Thursday 3rd September and Monday 14th September. The schedule for pupils returning to/starting Llanidloes High School is as follows:

Year Group	Start date
Year 7	Thursday 3 rd September, 2020
Year 11	Thursday 3 rd September, 2020
Year 13	Thursday 3 rd September, 2020
Year 10	Monday 7 th September, 2020
Year 12	Monday 7 th September, 2020
Year 8	Wed 9 th September, 2020
Year 9	Wed 9 th September, 2020

Please be aware that by 14th September, 2020, it will be compulsory for all pupils to attend school. This phased return will allow us time to settle pupils and ensure familiarity with routines to enable a smooth transition back to school.

What is the scientific evidence underpinning Welsh Government's decision to reopen schools to all pupils?

Welsh Government have been steered by the evidence provided by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). Please find below a summary of some of the key aspects within the TAG report.

1. Children under the age of 18 make up 22-25% of the population, but consistently make up <2% of the total Covid-19 caseload in every country.
2. Infection with SARS-CoV-2 appears to take a milder course in children than in adults: most infected children present with mild symptoms or are asymptomatic, and very few develop severe or life threatening disease.
3. There remains some on-going uncertainty in transmissibility of the disease by children, but real world observation of school opening in England and other countries has shown little transmission by children.



4. Emerging evidence shows limited child-to-child transmission, and it is suggested that the majority of children's cases are transmitted from adults within the same household. This appears to be borne out by the paucity of children as index cases.
5. Transmissibility in children under the age of 12 seems to be particularly low, and this leads us to feel able to recommend that these children can be Covid Secure using more flexible controls than the 2m distance, such as seating facing in the same direction. The hierarchy of controls especially hand and surface hygiene remain key measures.
6. Maintaining some distancing remains important in secondary age children who are likely to need to reduce overall daily contacts by 40-60% to maintain Covid-19 security. This could be achieved by...maintaining class/year 'Covid Secure groups' with avoidance of mixing to reduce overall daily close contacts (face to face conversation of at least 3 words, or physical contact) by half. Research indicates that in this 11-20 age group, there are on average approx. 20 daily contacts, so a 50% reduction would mean a reduction of all daily close contacts to approx. 10.

What should my child wear to school? What are the behavioural expectations?



Until further notice, **pupils can choose to wear either their own clothes or school uniform.** We will give families a minimum of three weeks notice before we reintroduce full uniform.

There are several reasons for our temporary suspension of the uniform policy. First, it will give families time to purchase uniform where necessary. Second, we hope it will help create a relaxed learning environment at a somewhat unsettling time. Third, we want to help parents adhere to the Local Authority uniform guidance without incurring additional cost. This guidance states that pupils ought '*wear clean, appropriate, easily washable clothing and footwear. Uniform that cannot be machine washed should be avoided.*' However, we intend to reintroduce full uniform as soon as reasonably practicable.

Regarding non-uniform dress code, it will helpful for students to bear in mind the following rule of thumb: '**Not too short, Not too low, Not too tight, Nothing on show.**'

Needless to say, our expectations around behaviour remain exceptionally high. Indeed, our safe, happy learning environment is one of our great strengths as a school community. Open defiance and any behaviour that deliberately puts others at risk will not be tolerated. We are thankful for your support in reinforcing this message where necessary.

When will I find out detailed information about the new term?

Our detailed reopening plans and risk assessments will be refined over the summer holidays to take into account any changes to the Welsh Government and Local Authority guidance. I will write to you again soon after GCSE results day with detailed information about September.

If you have any pressing questions, please email the school office – office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk - and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

And finally...

Once again, I would like to thank you for your splendid support this year. Staff have been reminded time and again just what a special community we serve. Your messages of encouragement, tremendous online learning support and good humour have been greatly appreciated. Given the circumstances, we couldn't be more delighted with the progress students have made.



Those pupils who have attended school over the past four weeks have clearly benefitted from returning to some form of normality, meeting friends and, of course, catching up on aspects of their education. We are really looking forward to seeing everyone return in September.

In the meantime, have a smashing, relaxing and enjoyable summer holiday.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line.

Daniel Owen (Headteacher)