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Covid-19 Bulletin – 19th March 2020

Dear Parents/Carer,
You have been in my thoughts and prayers at this deeply unsettling time.

It is hard to believe just how rapidly circumstances have altered since my last update on Tuesday. I cannot thank you enough for your many words of kindness and support. I have been inundated with offers of help, compassion filled questions about pupil and staff wellbeing and encouraging messages. What a wonderful, selfless community we serve here in Llanidloes!

I hope this brief letter provides answers to some frequently asked questions. If there is anything I have missed out, do not hesitate to call me at the school.

In particular, I would like to answer the following questions:

- **When will the school close?**
- **Will there be any exceptions for whom school will remain open next week?**
- **How will my child's exams be affected this summer?**
- **Should I keep my child off school on Thursday and Friday?**

1. Will the school close?

You may be aware by now that the Welsh Government's Minister for Education has stated that schools will close at the end of this week. At Llanidloes High School, we plan to remain open **until 3.35pm on Friday**. This school closure will affect nearly all pupils and will remain in effect until further notice. At this point in time, we do not know when children will be returning to school.

Needless to say, all events, activities and trips are postponed forthwith. I'm sorry to say this includes the prom. Perhaps we will be in a position to rearrange it for the autumn term? We will see.

2. Will there be any exceptions for whom school will remain open?

Powys Local Authority Chief Executive, Dr Caroline Turner, informed Headteachers yesterday afternoon that the Local Authority's initial plan is that a small number of school sites will be kept open across the county. These school sites will provide care for the specific groups of children, including:



- **Looked after children** (i.e. those in care)
- Pupils who receive **free school meals**
- Pupils with **acute needs** (including those at risk of harm)
- Pupils whose **parents work in the health services and other front line services**. The Local Authority will soon explain how they want us to identify these children to ensure they have a place to go whilst their parents are at work in front line services.

As soon as I have further details concerning precisely **who is eligible to remain in school and the school site they are able to attend**, I will let you know.

At the time of writing, I do not know which school sites will be kept open next week. Once again, I will let you know as soon as this has been agreed. I am hopeful that Llanidloes High School will be one of the schools that can serve the community in this way.

3. How will my child's exams be affected this summer?

The Minister for Education in Wales has announced the summer exam series will **NOT** be going ahead. To be clear, **YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE SITTING ANY GCSEs OR A-LEVELS THIS SUMMER**. They no longer need to revise as there will not be any exams. Rather, those due to sit their GCSEs and A levels this summer **will be awarded a fair grade to recognise their work, drawing on the range of information that is available**.

At present, it is unclear what 'range of information' will be used to determine your child's grades. Welsh Government will be working with the education sector to decide upon this shortly. As soon as we receive further information, we will let you know immediately.

4. Should I keep my child off school on Thursday and Friday this week?

If your child and the rest of household are well, your child is allowed to attend school as normal today and tomorrow.

However, if your child, or any member of the household, has a **new, continuous cough or a high temperature**, the whole household **must** remain at home (self-isolate) even if the symptoms are very mild.

5. General information

- **Individuals need to self-isolate for 7 days from the onset of these COVID-19 symptoms. Any individuals in the household will now be asked to self-isolate for 14 days from that moment as well.**
- If other members of your household develop symptoms, however mild, at any time during the 14 days, they must not leave the home for 7 days from when symptoms started.
- Government has taken the further measure of asking whole households to isolate because it is likely that people living with others will infect each other or be infected already. Staying at home for 14 days will greatly reduce the overall amount of infection the household could pass on to others in the community.
- For those who remain well, are under 70 or do not have an underlying health condition, they are advised to limit their social contact where possible.

- For those who are over 70, have an underlying health condition or are pregnant, they are strongly advised to significantly limit face-to-face interaction, even with friends and family, if possible.

Do you need support?

If there is anything we can do to help you, or if you have any questions/concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by email (office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk) or phone 01686 412289.

Thank you!

Before signing off, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their wonderful support at this time.

Pupils have been outstanding and deserve to be showered with praise! Attendance fell to 57% on Wednesday. Nonetheless, those who remained in school were impeccably behaved, mature and engaged in their learning. I am immensely proud!

I would also like to thank all the staff for their resilience, professionalism, positivity and compassion. They have put the needs of pupils and colleagues ahead of their own at every turn. Every teacher union in school has voluntarily set aside the workload agreement to cover absent colleagues to ensure we remain operational in support of parents and pupils. Several staff have already volunteered to serve in whichever school is chosen by the Local Authority to support pupils eligible for continued care and provision next week.

Governors have offered to go the extra mile and offer whatever support they can for the sake of the children and staff. Our chaplain has offered to provide counselling. Parents have been the very personification of patience, friendliness and fortitude. Thank you all for your fantastic support!

Keeping you informed

I will keep you all informed as more news is received. Do not hesitate to contact me at the school if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Daniel Owen', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Daniel Owen (Headteacher)