

Pennaeth / Headteacher: Mr D Owen
Llangurig Road, Llanidloes, Powys, SY18 6EX
Ffôn / Tel: 01686 412289
Ffacs / Fax: 01686 413812
Ebost / Email: office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk
Gwefan / Website: www.llanidloeshighschool.co.uk



5th January, 2021

January Bulletin

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you and your families refreshed and well after the Christmas holidays. I trust you haven't been too panicked by the latest announcement from Welsh Government. In this bulletin I will share information about the practical implications for your child's schooling from tomorrow.



It's certainly been a lively start to the new term. The four UK Chief Medical Officers have agreed that the UK is now at the highest level of risk, Joint Biosecurity Council level 5. In the light of that decision, the Welsh Government has decided that all schools should move to **online learning until January 18th**.

The government will use the next two weeks to continue to work with local authorities, schools and colleges to plan for the rest of term. Wales remains in the highest level of restrictions.

As a result, from tomorrow, the school will only be open for children of critical workers in Years 7 and 8 and vulnerable learners who cannot learn safely at home. **However, every child - including children of critical workers in Years 7 and 8 and vulnerable children - who can be safely cared for at home should be.** If you are a critical worker and your child cannot be safely cared for at home, please ring reception to book a place in school.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What does the Government mean by 'critical workers'?

The list of critical workers is published on the Welsh Government covid website: <https://gov.wales/identifying-children-critical-workers-guidance>

What if one parent is a critical worker and the other isn't?

The law only requires one parent to be a critical worker to qualify for access to education on the school site, but only where your child cannot learn safely at home.



Is it likely that many children will attend the school site?

No. Being included on the critical worker list does not mean children of all workers in these categories can or will be able to continue to send their children to school. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. **Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.**

Am I allowed to leave my child at home when I go to work?

If children can stay safely in their home, they should. The law doesn't say an age when you can leave a child on their own, but does make clear that a child shouldn't be left alone 'in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering or injury to health'. Use your judgement on how mature your child is before you decide to leave them alone.

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) says children under 12 are rarely mature enough to be left alone for a long period of time. Babies, toddlers and very young children should never be left alone.

What are the arrangements for learners due to sit exams in January?

Following the Minister for Education's policy decision to cancel WJEC Qualifications Wales regulated GCSEs, AS and A levels exams in summer 2021, GCSE unit examinations scheduled for January in English Literature, Welsh Literature and ICT have been withdrawn.

In relation to the alternative assessment arrangements that are being put in place for Qualifications Wales approved GCSE, AS and A levels, Welsh Government have been clear that there is no expectation that any assessments are undertaken before the Spring half term. The internal assessment window runs from **22 February to 23 April** to provide flexibility for teachers to embed these assessments within their teaching and learning plans and to ensure their learners are prepared, and to enable sufficient time for assessments to be completed in case of further disruption.



My child is in Years 7 and 8 (or is a vulnerable learner) and cannot learn safely at home. Will school transport be running? Yes. **The only exception is the Newtown bus which will NOT be running.** This is because this is a private service paid for by parents/carers whose children use the bus. There will be very few pupils on the bus rendering the service too expensive. The Local Authority transport policy means we are not permitted to subsidise the bus from the school budget.

Will learners who are in receipt of free school meals be able to receive them? The Local Authority will continue to provide vouchers and BACS payments to parents of pupils entitled to free school meals (eFSM) until 18th January. If you need more information, please contact the Local Authority cashless catering team at cashless.catering@powys.gov.uk or 01597 826660.

Will children follow their usual timetable from home?

All pupils learning online will follow their 'normal' timetables from home (we are currently in Week 1 and from Monday 11th January we begin Week 2). We want to ensure pupil progress is not adversely affected by the lack of on-site teaching. This is especially important for GCSE and A-level students who will start to prepare for the spring assessments. Therefore, expectations concerning the volume of work to be completed will be the same as if pupils were in school.

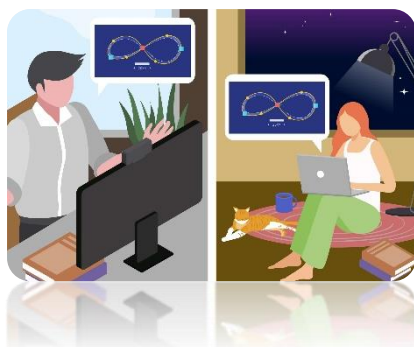
Given that a small number of children will be taught on site at the usual time, as far as possible we will retain the same time slots for other lessons throughout the week for teachers to set work, deliver live content where applicable, provide feedback and answer questions.



Does my child know their timetable and how to access online work?

All pupils have copies of their timetable in their planners and know how to access work on Microsoft Teams. If they need support, they can contact their subject teachers via the Class Team posts.

What kind of work will be set?



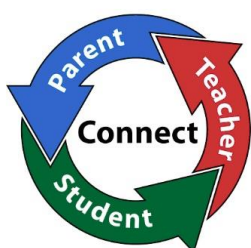
As with the fire break, some teachers will provide asynchronous (non-live) material, such as assignments, pre-recorded instructional videos and project work tailored to individual class needs. Other teachers will deliver live sessions/tutorials/Q&A sessions delivered via their Class Team. Teachers have worked closely with colleagues to design learning activities that match each child's needs.

There are different benefits to asynchronous and synchronous modes of lesson delivery. For example, the former allows pupils to work through materials at their own pace. The latter provides a deeper connection with pupils and enables teachers to provide immediate feedback in response to questions.



When will my child be told about the lesson content and work?

Work will be set or lessons scheduled by 8:45am each day of their lesson via each Class Team.



How can my child get the most out of the learning activities?

It would be helpful if you reinforced the following messages with your child:

- Ensure they have their timetable handy each morning and log into each of their Class Teams no later than 8.45am to check the work for that day.
- Where applicable, ensure they have read the simple guidance provided by their teachers on how to access 'live' (synchronous) sessions.

- Complete all the work set to a high standard and ask for feedback/clarification at an early stage adhering to deadlines for submission.
- Where possible, ask questions of teachers during timetabled slots so staff can effectively manage their on and off site commitments.

Please note that, in all cases, the safeguarding of staff and pupils will remain our main priority when 'live' sessions are conducted. We will be following the Welsh Government's guidance in this area: <https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/live-streaming-and-video-conferencing-safeguarding-principles-and-practice/>

We do not have a device or connectivity. Is help available?

If you do not have internet access or a device on which your child can work, please contact the school office via office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk. Mrs Taylor and/or Mr Gibson will get back to you with the best way forward.

Update on examination/assessment arrangements for pupils in Years 10-13

The Welsh Government's Design and Delivery Advisory Group has announced that assessments in 2021 will be based on:

- Non-Examination Assessments
- Internal assessments - based on existing WJEC assessment materials and delivered by centres within a broad window;
- Externally set and marked assessments – delivered flexibly within qualification assessment windows to suit local teaching and learning requirements.

At the time of writing, we are awaiting the WJEC's publication of high level information on qualification structures and assessment arrangements. As promised, we will share this information with you and the students as soon as it becomes available.

And finally...

As always, please do not hesitate to get in touch using the office@llanidloes-hs.powys.sch.uk email address or by ringing the school on 01686 412289 if you have any questions. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours faithfully,



Daniel Owen (Headteacher)

