

Ysgol Uwchradd **LLANIDLOES** High School

Giving Opportunities For All to Learn



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2nd October, 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

John F. Kennedy once said, *"The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word 'crisis.' One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger, but recognize the opportunity."*

The new academic year has served up plenty of visible reminders that we are navigating our way through a perilous period. Our time has been spent demarcating zones, erecting new fencing, distributing face coverings, enforcing one way systems, deep cleaning isolation rooms and updating risk assessments to adhere to the latest version of the Government's operational guidance.



On the other hand, the new academic year has reminded us of the wonderful opportunities that exist at Llanidloes High School.

Delighted GCSE, A-level and vocational course students have received splendid Centre Assessed Grades. It has been marvellous to welcome a smashing cohort of new Year 7 pupils who are brimming with excitement, eagerness to excel and hope for the future. The behaviour and attitude of nearly all of our pupils in the midst of this pandemic has been impeccable. Our new staff have arrived with a wealth of ideas, expertise, talent and energy. Our experienced staff have helped instil a tangible sense of calm, compassion

and commitment to pupils' welfare and academic progress.

We are looking ahead to the rest of the academic year hopeful that it will be filled with opportunities.



A few crucial reminders about safeguarding

Thank you all for your patient understanding as we implement Welsh Government's safeguarding regulations. Please remember that the main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature: this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back
- a new, continuous cough: this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours
- a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste

If you or your child develops one of these symptoms, you should:

- follow the Government's self-isolation guidance: <https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possible-coronavirus>
- apply for a coronavirus test: <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test>

Under no circumstances should your child attend school if they:

- feel unwell with any of the identified COVID-19 symptoms. They should remain at home and self-isolate and arrange a COVID-19 test;
- have tested positive for COVID-19;
- live in a household with someone who has symptoms of, or has tested positive for COVID-19.

If your child develops symptoms whilst at school, we will contact you to ask that you make arrangements for your child's journey home. **All pupils who are self-isolating can access work from each of their teachers and receive feedback within Microsoft Teams.**

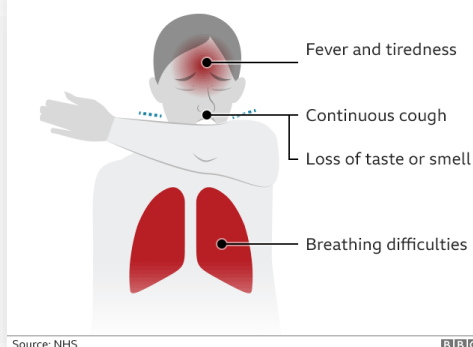
Is uniform still being introduced on Monday 5th October?



Yes, your child is expected to wear school uniform from Monday.

Towards the end of August, I wrote to explain that we will be **introducing uniform again from Monday 5th October**. Welsh Government's operational guidance says, 'We...encourage all schools to return to their usual uniform policies in the autumn term.' We temporarily suspended our uniform policy to help create a relaxed learning environment at a somewhat unsettling time of transition.

Coronavirus: Key symptoms



Source: NHS

BBC

A few parents have shared concerns about the practicality of washing blazers. By way of reassurance, the Welsh Government guidance does not mention the frequency with which clothes need to be washed. However, there is clearly an expectation in the guidance that uniform ought to be washed more often than usual. Therefore, while we encourage you to send your child to school in full uniform from Monday, please just let us know if you have not been able to get their blazer washed, ready or purchased in time.

[Is there financial support available for families?](#)

Grants are available to help families on low incomes buy school uniform and equipment. Learners receiving free school meals can get a Welsh Government grant for school uniform and equipment if they are:

- Entering reception class in primary school;
- At the start of any of the three key stages e.g. Key Stage 2, Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 (primary and secondary);
- aged 4, 7, 11 or 14 in special schools, special needs resource bases or pupil referral units.



If you believe that your eligibility has changed, and you are entitled to receive the grant, please contact the Income and Awards Department on 01597 827462. **Details about claiming free school meals and the school uniform and equipment grant can also be found on the Powys County Council website via the following link:**

<https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/3758/Free-school-meals-and-help-with-school-clothing>

[Have exam boards adapted their course content to take into account lost teaching time?](#)

You can now access summary booklets outlining adaptations being made to A level, GCSE and vocational qualifications on WJEC's. There is also a range of support materials, tools and resources. We have communicated this information to your child where applicable:

<https://www.wjec.co.uk/home/summer-2021-get-the-support-you-need/summer-2021-changes-to-assessments/>

[Update on face coverings in school](#)



In response to the recent positive case of covid-19 in the school, we now require all students to wear face covering in the corridors, even where social distancing is maintained.

Thank you for continuing to ensure your child has a face covering in school. Let us know if you need support to provide a face covering for your child.

It is important to remember that social/physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene (catching a cough or sneeze in a tissue or covering the mouth and nose with an elbow or sleeve) remain strongly evidenced to be the most effective ways to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

[Is it still preferable to send our child to school with a packed lunch?](#)

Pupils are still encouraged to bring packed lunches to school to ensure they remain in their contact group zone during break and lunch. However, 'Grab-and-Go' hot food is available at lunchtime for those without a packed lunch. Please ensure your ParentPay accounts are topped up if your child is going to use the canteen.

Strict handwashing and cleaning before and after food consumption will be required.

[Free Welsh magazines online!](#)

For one year only, all Urdd magazines (Cip, Bore da and IAW!) are available free and online. Urdd magazines are an invaluable resource, as they include a wealth of articles, interviews, puzzles, recipes, competitions, and so on. 'IAW!' is the most relevant magazine for high school pupils and is suitable for both Welsh First and Second Language pupils. Please follow the link below to subscribe to the magazines:

<https://www.urdd.cymru/en/magazines/>



[Good news stories](#)



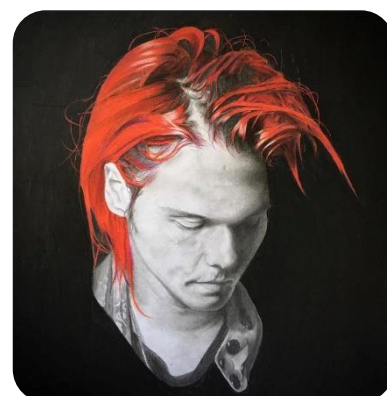
Congratulations to Carys Morgan in Year 8 who has met the required selection criteria for Swim Wales National Skills Academy for 2020/2021 season. This is a fantastic achievement! Carys worked extremely hard during lockdown with river swims. She has been training every day and clearly deserves this fantastic opportunity. I am sure she will inspire others to follow her lead into competitive swimming.

Well done to Matthew Higgins who currently leads the Rotax British Kart championship by four points. He has also been competing with great success in the X30 British championship. Matt is pictured here in blue on the podium. At the moment, only the driver, mechanic and parent/carer are allowed to attend these events, but Matthew can rest assured that the whole school is cheering him on.





We are exceptionally proud of Trin Stephens, one of our talented young artists. Her work is currently part of a local exhibition. I'm sure you'll agree that her mastery of the graphite medium is breath-taking. Pictured here are two drawings entitled 'Light up the sky' (left) and 'Light behind your eyes' (right).

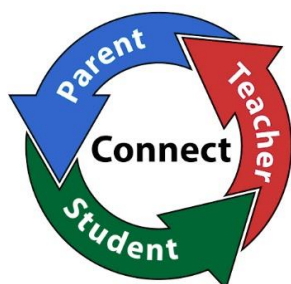


Does my child still have two weeks off at half term?

Yes, following Welsh Government's decision to extend the summer term by one week, the October half term has also been extended by one week and will run on Monday 19th October until Friday 30th October.



Coming soon



Shortly after half term, we will be providing those of you with children in Years 10-13 with the latest updates from Qualifications Wales, exam boards and the school's support strategy. All parents/carers will also receive information about blended learning, mock examinations, parents/open evenings and guidance on how you can best support your child over the year(s) ahead.

And finally...

I am aware that I have written to you several times over the last few months and run the risk of inflicting information fatigue. I do appreciate the time you take to read these letters. It is important that you do because some of the information is of critical importance for protecting all of the pupils and staff of the school, as well as their extended families.

Have a smashing, albeit slightly wet weekend. 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.

Yours faithfully,

Daniel Owen (Headteacher)