

Penllergaer Primary School

Parent newsletter Reopening of school

Thank you to staff

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the amazing team of staff I have the privilege to lead. They have responded enthusiastically and professionally, often with less than 48 hr notice, to the Welsh Government and local authority directives regarding schools' role during the Covid-19 lockdown. They have switched from learning in the classroom to planning differentiated home learning and remote learning resources that can be tracked and marked to provide next steps for progress. Staff have had to learn new IT skills to do this. In addition, they have worked in the emergency childcare setting and delivered free school meals, stationery, and IT devices. They have kept in touch with families and made weekly phone calls, logging actions and concerns and following up any safeguarding or support issues. They worked through their holidays and we must not forget that they too have families who are home learning. Staff are now preparing for 'Check in, catch up and prepare', the first phase of returning to school. All sterling work of which I am very proud.

Reopening

The Minister for Education in Wales (Kirsty Williams) announced on 3 June 2020 that schools reopen from 29th June to 27th July to give all children the opportunity to 'Check in, Catch up, Prepare' for summer and September. **This does not mean your child will be in school every day.** To quote the Minister and Director of Education for Swansea 'each school has different sized classes, classrooms, physical space, grounds and staffing capacity'. Therefore, there will not be a consistent system across the local authority but there will be a similar approach and set of principles.

Apologies for the timeframe and delay in getting this information out to you. We have been waiting local authority guidance. Penllergaer Primary has a comprehensive operational plan, cleaning plan and risk assessment in place. It has been devised using the most up to date guidance from Welsh and UK governments and Public Health Wales. However, it is important to note that **total mitigation of the risk of contamination/infection with COVID-19 is not possible.**

We appreciate parents and pupils are afraid and anxious. The Pontarddulais Cluster Emergency Childcare Setting has been open for 12 weeks so we have drawn on this experience for our Return to School model. We will do all we can to make the 'check in, catch up and prepare' experience for your child as safe and enjoyable as possible. We want the school and classrooms to be a welcoming environment, so our bright, colourful displays remain. Classrooms and central shared areas have been redesigned to support one-way traffic systems and 2 m distance rules.

I can confirm the following:

- The local authority has supplied us with classroom measurements on which we can based pupil numbers.
- Not every pupil and staff member will return as they are shielding or extremely vulnerable. Pupils who are in receipt of a shielding letter due to their medical vulnerability or who live in a household with someone who is in receipt of a shielding letter should not return to school.
- Penllergaer Primary will adopt the local authority principles. Schools in Swansea will **not be open for nursery pupils until September at the earliest.**
- Pupils will NOT experience a 'normal' school day.
- The start and end times of the school day will differ for different classes. Schools have been given WG permission to do this at the headteacher's discretion.
- There will be no more than a third of the school in at any one time.
- Pupils will be in groups of no more than 10 children from their current class.
- **STF pupils have slightly different guidance which will be shared with parents individually.**
- Children should bring a coat or sunhat with them (please apply sun cream before attending). School uniform is relaxed. Comfortable shoes such as trainers as children will be outside as often as possible.

- Adults entering the site will be expected to adhere to the 2m distance rule and not loiter.
- Teachers will check in and catch up with each child and support pupils with our home learning strategy.
- Parents will not face penalty fines if their child does not attend school at this time.
- Should the school's capacity fall due to the availability of staff the capacity may have to be reduced due to self-isolation or on-site infection.
- Parents are requested to allow an extra few minutes for dropping off and collecting their child due to the restrictions on entering the school site.
- **Busy bees gate is closed.** The two entrances/exits are the main gate off Pontarddulais Road and the Bellway Parc Penderi gate into the school.

Year Groups	Entrance/Exit
Years 1, 2, 3 and 4	Parc Penderi (Bellway) gate
Reception, Years 5 and 6	Front gate on Pontarddulais Rd

Those who cannot attend the 'check in, catch up and prepare' days, for whatever reason, will be given the opportunity to have a **live virtual face to face** with their current class teacher. Again, parents will be contacted individually by the class teacher to arrange this.

Control measures

The following control measures are in place to control the risk of infection:

- Pupils will wash their hands on-entry, exit, before eating, after using the toilet and at regular intervals throughout the day. They will be watched whilst washing their hands to ensure it is completed correctly. We aim for hand washing to become embedded practice.
- All surface, door handles and push buttons will be cleaned regularly throughout the day.
- All toys and equipment used will be disinfected, rotated and cleaned regularly after use.
- Staff may use PPE so prepare your child for seeing staff wearing masks.
- **Pupils will be encouraged to adhere to social distancing** throughout their time in school, but we acknowledge **this is very difficult with young children.**
- Pupils will remain with the staff allocated to their group for the day they are in school.
- Groups will not mix with other groups.
- No bags permitted. Please send packed lunch, water bottle and snack in a carrier bag labelled with your child's name. Breaks and lunch times will be staggered to allow children to be spread out more but still be able to chat and eat alongside their friends.
- Activities such as art, singing, and story time will be done in small groups so the children can be spread out more.
- If a child becomes ill, parents will be phoned to collect their child immediately.
- No parents will be allowed to enter the building. Should you wish to speak to a member of staff please make an appointment by telephoning or emailing the school.
- Hand over will take place outside the classroom or at the school gate.

Should you want to discuss social distancing and coronavirus with your child prior to returning to school, there are many age appropriate short presentations on the internet.

At PPS we are aiming to give every child two opportunities to come into school before the end of the summer holiday. This will be equivalent to **two days (four sessions)**. We have endeavoured to consider friendship groups and siblings when constructing the timetable. However, with over 350 pupils there are too many permutations to accommodate all. Apologies in advance for any inconvenience caused if siblings are on different days, for the limited amount of days offered and for the staggered start and end times. **Parents will be contacted individually in the next week with date, start and end time for your child.**

Prior to coronavirus schools were examining teaching and learning and developing a new curriculum for Wales. As part of the 'Check in, Catch up, Prepare' we aim to support pupils' wellbeing, establish where each child is at with their learning and provide next step information and materials for home

learning. We will be using research based effective teaching and learning strategies such as retrieval practice, spaced learning and blended learning techniques. Remote learning will continue until the end of term. **For us in PPS, there is a valuable purpose to these Return to School days.** Staff will be using them to ascertain new ways of working and what we need to do to improve going forward.

Emergency Childcare

Our paid childcare facility will remain closed. We will continue to provide **emergency** childcare for key worker children. Places are limited and tend to be filled by children whose both parents are key workers. For non-critical workers, childcare services across Swansea are reopening.

Transition

Our Year 6 pupils have received transition packs from the comprehensive schools and some information regarding their transition concerns and questions. Virtual tours will follow.

All other year groups will shortly receive transition information via email and school website.

Reports

Before the end of term, all parents will be emailed information on their child's next year group for the academic year September 2020-21. We hope you will share this with your child.

We are currently writing end of year pupil reports and finalising our class structure for Sept 2020.

We aim to get these out by Friday 17th July 2020.

Finally

Reopening under the guidance is a challenge to organise. **Things will be different for some time.** We accept the situation is unusual and our solution is not ideal or straight forward. However, it is the best we can offer for our school and is one we can build on for the future. We ask you to respect our decisions despite the fact they may not be the most convenient for your family.

Please note that processes are under constant review. Guidance from the local authority continue to alter and I will inform you of any changes as they are made.

Thank you for your support. We are looking forward to seeing your children.

Jayne Woolcock

Headteacher