



# Gnoll Primary School

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*Headteacher: Mr. Rhys Harris*

*Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2020*

Dear Parent/Carers,

I am writing with some information about coronavirus and how it may affect school over the next few weeks or months. I am hoping that some of the information below will help to put minds at rest:

### **Why is the school opening and how are we protecting children from the Coronavirus?**

The school is following government and Public Health Wales advice. We are unable to make a unilateral decision to close and have to follow this advice. Fortunately, the virus seems to affect children far less than older people. However, we are ensuring children wash their hands regularly and that they 'catch' coughs. We have also limited visitors to school and have hand sanitiser available for any essential visitors.

### **Have you cancelled any events?**

Yes, we have cancelled all non-essential events including:

- 1) Assemblies and concerts e.g. Easter assembly
- 2) Easter events e.g. Easter Bonnet Parade, coffee morning
- 3) All school trips and after school clubs
- 4) Parent groups such as Family Fun, Playgroup and coffee mornings
- 5) The PTFA Easter Events

### **Can I keep my child home?**

We realise this is a unique and very worrying time for parents, especially if you have relatives who are vulnerable. If you choose to keep your child home, this is unauthorised at the moment as the school has to follow the county attendance policy. If things change, we will let you know immediately.

### **My child has a new dry cough and/or a fever. Should I keep them home?**

Yes please keep them home for 14 days self-isolation. Please let the school know you are doing this.

### **Another member of the family has a new dry cough and/or a fever. Should I keep my child home?**

The advice shared recently by the UK Government states that if a family member has a dry cough and a high temperature/fever then all the family must self-isolate for 14 days. Please keep an eye on the news/ Public Health Wales for any changes to this.

### **If school closes, will you provide work for children?**

Yes, preparations for this are underway at the moment. It will be challenging, especially for younger children but staff are making every effort to ensure that, in the eventuality of school closing, we provide you with as much as possible to do at home.

### Will you provide me with work if I choose to keep my child home?

Unfortunately, this is not possible. Those who know how teaching works will know that it takes many hours to plan work for classes and teaching now does not rely on worksheets or text books which could easily be shared. To ask staff to continue to plan work for the children in school and to provide work for those being kept home would be too much. However, I will put some ideas for home activities on the school website under the class pages section. If you do choose to keep your child home, please do the following as a minimum:

- 1) Hear your child read or read to them for at least 20 minutes daily.
- 2) Practise basic maths e.g. numbers to 10/100/1000/10,000 (depending on age). You can use counters/coins/buttons etc. if the children need this support.
- 3) Learn to count in 2s, 5s, 10s (infants). Start at different points e.g. from 20/6/15 and go backwards as well as forwards. For older children learn your tables.
- 4) Make sure your child spends as much time as possible outside, in the garden if possible.

### How will you cover staff absence?

Whilst schools remain open we will make every effort to keep things as normal for the children as possible. However, if we do have staff absence, it is likely to be very difficult to get supply cover. We have put together a *Business Continuity Plan* for these circumstances and actions we **may** have to take will include:

- 1) Combining classes, especially if large numbers of pupils are absent as well;
- 2) Asking parents to provide packed lunches, if kitchen staff are unavailable;
- 3) Moving staff around to cover more vulnerable pupils;
- 4) Keeping children in school but doing less 'teacher intensive tasks';
- 5) If school transport is affected, asking parents to provide lifts.
- 6) As a very **last** resort, shortening school days or closing for some/all pupils. This can only be done on a unilateral basis if there is a significant lack of supervision or health and safety issue in school e.g. no First Aiders, large numbers of senior teachers off, no cleaning service.

Can I appeal to everyone to continue to support us at this time? We find ourselves in a situation which is worrying, unknown and has no precedent. We will make every attempt to keep in contact with parents and keep you informed as soon as possible about any changes/ news we receive. Please rest assured that the children's wellbeing is always our top priority.

Yours sincerely,

Rhys Harris

Headteacher



Together We Nurture, Inspire and Achieve  
*Gyda'n Gilydd rydym yn Meithrin, Ysbradoli a Chyflawni*