



15th June 2020

Annwyl Rieni / Dear Parents,

Following the announcement by Kirsty Williams (Minister for Education) on Wednesday 3rd June 2020, stating that schools will reopen for “**Check in, Catch up and Prepare for Summer and September**”, Ysgol Ifor Hael will be reopening from Monday, 29th June until Friday, 24th July 2020 to offer **some contact time** for all pupils in every year group. After carefully considering Welsh [Government guidance](#) which came out last week and following detailed discussions with the Local Authority, our main priority will be the health, safety and well-being of all pupils and staff, therefore I would like you to consider the following:

What is the purpose of the sessions?

The Minister described it as "Check in, Catch up and Prepare". We want to welcome the pupils back, have a catch up with them, see how they are feeling and check how they are managing this unusual time through well-being sessions. We will also check how they are managing their home learning, help them with anything they are unsure about and help them prepare for September with some transition activities, meet their new teacher and give them the opportunity to ask any questions they may have. We aim to spend lots of time outdoors in small groups playing non-contact sports.

What will school look like for my child?

School will NOT be returning to normal. On arrival at school, the class teachers will welcome your child in strategic areas. They will use hand sanitizer on entry to school and will be asked to wash their hands regularly throughout their day. We ask that parents/guardians please observe social distancing rules and be respectful towards others in terms of social distancing when dropping children off at school (see below).

The classrooms will look different to ensure we can maintain social distancing, for example, individual tables with equipment for each pupil and a mixture of table top tasks and outdoor activities.

Pupils will be required to social distance 2m away from others, and movement will be limited around the school. Our calculations with these restrictions mean that there will be a **maximum of 8-10 pupils** in a classroom. Staff have spent time reorganising their rooms to ensure this. Pupils will be in the same group 'bubble group' of up to 10 in all sessions, including break times and lunch time. Their group will be on a designated area of the yard to avoid contact with other groups.

A short video will be available soon to give you an idea of what school will look like. It will be posted on the school website and on Google Classroom shortly.

From June 22nd, we will be operating Keyworker childcare provision in the community room in the Hafan. Welsh Government advises that keyworker children will not be able to join a 'bubble group' within the 4 week timeframe. They will be able to if parents decide not to send their children to the childcare hub (to eliminate cross-contamination within the school).

When will my child be able to come into school?

Welsh Government guidelines state schools can accommodate up to a **third** of pupils at any one time, therefore, due to our building capacity and accommodation of key workers' children and vulnerable pupils, Reception to Year 6 pupils will be offered **one** day in school per week, for three weeks only. This is dependent on definite numbers coming back to school. Then we can plan for the sessions.

Due to our Year 6 pupils leaving for secondary schools, we will be offering Year 6 pupils an additional day w/c 20th July to prepare them for secondary school and to celebrate their time at Ifor Hael. Also during this week, we will

offer transition sessions for our Nursery pupils moving up to Reception in September, where they will be introduced to their new teachers, and new to Nursery pupils will be able to visit their classroom on a 'Stay and Play' basis for a short time.

What will they wear and do they need to bring anything with them?

There will be no school uniform requirement so pupils should wear their own clothes. As we will be working outdoors where possible, please ensure clothing is comfortable and warm, including coats and sunhats. They will be provided with their own equipment e.g. pens and pencils.

Pupils will need to bring a **packed lunch** (which they will eat in their classroom) and a labelled **water bottle**. Pupils may not bring any equipment into school. They may only use the equipment that we provide them with. They may not share anything with another pupil.

What time will school start?

We will be staggering start and end times to reduce the number entering and exiting the site at any one time. We will be operating one-way systems. (more information to follow). It will be essential that your child arrives only at their allotted time so that they do not have contact with a pupil from another bubble. When dropping and collecting your child at school, you must wait outside by the main gate (Yrs 1, 2 and 3) and the drive (outside the school's main vehicle gate for Yrs 4, 5 and 6). Reception pupils will enter via the Hafan gate as usual. Staff will greet pupils at the gate to show them the way to their entry point. **No parents will be allowed down the main steps or drive, only pupils.** All parents must maintain a 2 metre distance from all other parents. Only one person from each household may collect a child or children from that household. If your child walks to school on their own, they must have no contact with any other child from outside their bubble.

Will the school buses/taxis still run?

The local authority is working with passenger transport providers to develop safe transport for a prioritised group of pupils with complex needs and disabilities who cannot find alternative methods of transport. Due to unprecedented Covid related issues, mainstream pupil transport **will not** be available when schools partially re-open on June 29th. The local authority is working to secure safe pupil transport for September and will notify schools and parents when there is more information.

What else will be in place to keep my child safe?

- Within each bubble, hygiene will be the highest priority. Your child will be instructed to wash and sanitise their hands regularly. Each classroom will have hand sanitizer and disinfectant sprays/wipes and there will be an increase in the cleaning routines within the school with regular hand washing being maintained throughout the school day.
- Pupils will be encouraged to keep as much distance as possible from each other, but it will not be possible to guarantee a risk free environment. Therefore the school cannot be held responsible for any outcome that may arise as a consequence. Our behaviour management policy will be adjusted to make clear to children what the new contact rules are. Parents are kindly requested to reinforce the social distance rules at home prior to attendance at school using the resources posted by the staff in Google Classrooms.
- Pupils' movement in and around school will be severely limited. They will eat in their classroom. No hot food will be available as unfortunately, Chartwells staff have all been furloughed. They will have outdoor breaks, but will be kept separate from all other bubbles.
- Only one pupil at a time will be allowed to enter the toilets, with an allocated toilet cubicle for their 'bubble'.
- If your child requires any first aid help at school for any reason, they will be tended to as usual by a trained member of staff, but that member of staff will wear personal protective equipment. This will consist of gloves and an apron.
- Parents and other visitors will not be allowed on school premises without an appointment. We are, as ever, available to talk to on the telephone. In the exceptional event of a meeting being necessary, an appointment should be made, and strict social distancing rules will be applied throughout the meeting.

Will the home learning/online learning continue?

Yes, the expectation is that online work will continue going forward, as we do not know what the situation will be in September. It is anticipated that school will be a blended approach- some school contact days and home learning days moving forward.

What if my child is in the 'vulnerable category'?

If your child is shielding, or living with someone who is in this group, they should not come back to school and should continue home learning. If your child is clinically vulnerable, (Clinically Vulnerable individuals are at greater than average risk from COVID-19), you should follow medical advice to decide if they should come back to school. Please refer to [government guidance](#) for further details of these groups.

What if I don't send my child to school?

The decision to send your child to school is entirely at the parent's discretion. There will be no phone calls, fines or loss of attendance if you choose that you would rather not attend at the moment.

If your child, or anyone else in your household, shows COVID-19 symptoms (high temperature, coughing or lack of smell or taste), you should not send them to school, but should instead follow government guidance related to testing and isolation. If your child develops symptoms at school, they will be sent home immediately (an isolation room has been identified) and government guidance should be followed.

Welsh Government Summer Holiday Change

The summer holidays have been shortened by a week, now starting week commencing Monday, 27th July, but the October half term will be extended to two weeks. Dates will be confirmed by Welsh Government.

What next?

We appreciate that this is a difficult decision as a parent and I would like you to consider carefully if the offer is for you. In order for me to plan for numbers, I need you to inform me of your decision if you require a place for your child or not. You can communicate this to the school via this [link](#) or email the school office: ysgifo@newport.gov.uk. I need to **know your response by this Friday, 19th June @ 3pm**. Once this deadline has passed, we cannot guarantee a place for your child until September. After this date, we will look at pupil groups and once the groups have been organised, we will not be able to change them due to numbers but we will endeavour to let you know the date and times that your child has been allocated by Friday 19th June.

I recognise the difficult decision placed on all of our families. I hope that you understand that the information provided in this letter is not aimed at causing any additional fear or anxiety. However, we feel that it is important that we provide some additional information on how we will implement protective measures in order to keep children, families and staff as safe as we are able and how these will impact on the day to day running of the school. It should be remembered that risk cannot be entirely removed and so it is for parents to come their own decision based upon the information that we have provided.

I would like to thank you for your continuous support in helping your child learn from home. Staff have been overwhelmed by the positive attitudes of our children and their families, and are extremely proud of you all. Whilst, we know that home schooling in itself presents problems, we are so impressed with how this has been handled. I have loved seeing all the dances, baking, videos of our pupils etc.

I will write again when we are nearer finalising our plans.

Take care and stay safe.
Diolch yn fawr.

Bethan Parry-Jones
Pennaeth/ Headteacher
Ysgol Gymraeg Ifor Hael