



Primary School Partnership

This information is not intended to answer every question but to answer questions that have been asked in the main

Return to school – Frequently Asked Questions – June 2020

The following answers are taken from Welsh Government guidance documents, Newport Local Authority Risk Assessments and guidance, risk assessments specific to Alway Primary and proposals for preparation to re-open schools.

When will school open for more pupils?

Along with all other schools in Wales, will start the next phase of opening for Reception – Year 6 pupils on Monday 29 June until Friday 17 July.

Therefore, all Reception to Year 6 pupils will have the opportunity of face-to-face time with their teachers once a week – 3 times and one Thursday session over the three weeks. Year 6 pupils will have the opportunity to meet Llanwern staff at some point. We are hoping to offer the Nursery pupils moving to reception to have an opportunity to ‘stay and play’ one session.

How will school re-opening work?

Year groups will be split into cohorts with staggered starts, and end times. We have ensured that siblings will be placed in groups that attend on the same days. It is expected that this will mean, at most, a third of pupils will be present at any one time.

There will be much smaller classes, providing secure dedicated time with teachers and some classmates. This time will include personalised classroom experience and getting children and teachers ready for a similar experience in September if current arrangements continue.

Pupils will have literacy, numeracy and wellbeing sessions. They will have dedicated outdoor time, which will be physical development and fun sessions, which will give them a chance to take exercise. There will be brief breaks during sessions which will allow pupils to eat lunch or snacks in their classrooms. They will be able to go to the toilet and this will be in a way that maintains social distancing as groups will not be in toilets together. Staff will supervise a hand washing routine on arrival and before and after changes of activity. Hygiene will be taught in an age-appropriate way. This will also be true of social distancing. From experience in the cluster hubs, pupils quickly get used to these routines and the atmosphere will be caring and supportive.

Parents and guardians will have been notified of the days their children will attend with times for arrival and departure, these need to be strictly adhered to. Families have a dedicated access point at the bottom of the steps by the school canteen. If you have not yet heard from the class teacher, you will need to contact them via class Dojo. They will have already tried to contact you several times.

Why has the Welsh Government made this decision now?

Since the decision to close schools for statutory provision, our understanding of the virus and its longer-term impacts has continued to develop. We know that we are going to have to live with it for some time and that it will remain our biggest challenge for the foreseeable future.

What we are doing is creating the opportunity for children to Check in, Catch Up and Prepare before the start of September. By doing this now it will give children vital contact time before the summer holiday which will have important social, learning and attainment gap benefits. This will help prepare learners for contact time after the summer holidays and will also allow schools to test operations before the autumn term, should these arrangements continue.

For parents and teachers too this is an important opportunity to experience and be confident of the safety measures in place. The safety of staff and learners is paramount. By the 29 June there will have been one full month of test, trace and protect and schools will have put many safety and hygiene processes in place.

I'm a parent / guardian who is shielding (have received a letter from the doctor). Do I send my child / children back to school at the end of June?

If you are a shielding parent or guardian, there is **no expectation to send your child / children back to school at the end of June**. Parents **won't be** fined for keeping their child / children at home. These children will continue to be supported by their schools in different ways but **families should keep in communication with the school so they understand why they are not attending**.

My child is shielding. Will they have to return to school at the end of June?

If your child is shielding they **should not return** to school at the end of June or use the opportunity of these check-in sessions. Shielded children will continue to be supported by their schools in different ways.

Will clinically vulnerable staff or learners be expected to return to school?

In the context of COVID-19, Clinically Vulnerable individuals are at greater than average risk from COVID-19. This category includes people aged over 70, those who are pregnant and those who have a range of chronic health conditions. Pregnant women are specifically advised to work from home after 28 weeks' gestation.

People in this category **can go out to work** but they should work from home if possible. If staff or learners do attend, extra care must be taken to ensure vulnerable individuals, and those around them **adhere to strict social distancing guidelines. In the case of learners, we would only expect these to attend where parents/carers consent to this.**

Will parents be fined if they do not send their child to school?

During this time parents **won't be fined for keeping their child / children at home.** These children will **continue to be supported by their schools** in different ways.

What date is the October half-term break?

Welsh Government are working to determine the date for the additional week on the October half-term break and will ensure it is communicated as soon as possible.

Test Trace Protect

The new Test, Trace, Protect strategy published on 13 May was implemented across Wales from 1 June and will be a critical factor in supporting the increase in operations of schools.

This strategy sets out the next phase of Welsh Government's approach to tackling coronavirus; testing people with symptoms in the community, tracing those who have come into close contact with people who have tested positive for coronavirus, and protecting family, friends and our community by self-isolating.

Existing hubs provision

For learners who are currently using hubs provision, the expectation is that schools and settings should continue to make additional provision for those learners. This will be in their own school.

What do you mean by 'catch-up'?

By 'catch-up' we mean giving every pupil a chance to check in with their teachers to assess their wellbeing and what support is required. Teachers can provide support to pupils on core skills, blending the online and personalised learning, in smaller classes with dedicated support.

We do not expect schools to be running a full catch-up programme in these circumstances and in this timeframe.

Are school staff expected to be providing face to face and remote learning from 29 June?

As we move into this next phase there will be a blended learning approach to support learners both in and outside of school. Distance learning (children learning from home) will continue alongside school sessions.

What about wearing school uniform?

We would prefer it if your child/children could wear a school polo shirt/t-shirt/ Summer uniform. However, we understand if children have outgrown their uniform over the lockdown period. We ask, if there is no school uniform available, that children dress in appropriate clothing for playing and running outside. As a guide we would suggest the main thing is to wear something that is comfortable and easily washable.

Pupils will not need PE kit in the weeks until the end of the Summer term.

Will pupils need to bring food and drink to school?

Whilst we ask that pupils do not bring unnecessary personal possessions to school, they will need a packed lunch and a water bottle. Food will not be shared and no canteen facilities will be used. Therefore, pupils will need only a healthy packed lunch, a piece of fruit for snack and a bottle of water. They will bring all containers home for washing at the end of their session. These will be kept at their desks with them in most cases.

Will schools be open over the summer break for the care of children of critical workers and vulnerable children?

There is no expectation that schools continue hubs provision during the summer holidays. Local authorities may make alternative provision but it is not expected that this will be managed by school staff.

Will staff or pupils need PPE (personal protective equipment)?

Staff will only need to use PPE if a pupil shows signs of having Covid-19 or there is bodily fluid spillage (as normal). Anyone showing signs of Covid-19 will wait in a dedicated room and their parent will be contacted. We will follow our medical advice, which is in our risk assessment and supervising staff will wear PPE. Staff will not need to wear masks other than when dealing with medical issues. Pupils do not need to wear PPE to school.

What if my child has additional needs, including medical needs?

If your child has a healthcare plan, we will get in touch with you to amend this if needed before your child returns to school. This will include how we will manage any physical needs safely and effectively.

If a pupil finds it difficult to manage the return to school and stick to social distancing guidance, we will discuss this with you and agree how we can support your child. This may include a change to the arrangements for your child. However, with very small groups, we expect to have some flexibility to support pupils. Pupils with 1:1 support will be contacted prior to the 29 June to discuss the support. It is important to understand that staff are working differently but they will certainly give your child the support they need.

What if my child finds the new environment and changes to school unsettling?

In the hubs, nearly all pupils have enjoyed being in school again, even if not their own school. In their own school, most things will still be familiar to your child and they will be warmly welcomed by staff and their peers. Although some things will be a bit different, they will have extra attention, support and encouragement. They will have their own seat or space, which will be cleaned and ready for them. Classrooms will have less furniture but still be welcoming. Pictures are available on Dojo as examples.

What about hygiene?

School will be cleaned more than usual and equipment will be cleaned after use. A full day of focussed cleaning will take place every week. During the school day, regular cleaning of toilets will take place. Pupils will wash their hands often and regularly and learn about good hygiene in a child-friendly way. Cleaning staff will also be deployed during the school day.

Will my child be with their friends?

We have tried to include friends in small groups. However, due to keeping siblings together and the fact that some pupils are shielding, etc. we cannot offer a choice of which will be on the same day or which day we can offer. We have allocated a space for every child. When teachers contacted you with a day, you may not have needed it because of shielding or because you have chosen that the time is not yet right for you or your child. However, groups will not be rearranged or mixed together. Similarly, pupils in the key worker childcare hub will stay in their own group. This has been stipulated by local authority guidance.

Why are there different timings to the school day?

We are staggering school times for several reasons. Different arrival times and finish times will support social distancing and we would ask you to stick to these times and to use the allocated entrances. There will be signage around the site and in school to remind us all about social distancing.

Although the school day looks shorter, the lunch break will be shorter. Breaks/ lunch will take place in classrooms and as we will have fewer pupils in school, less time will be needed. There will be cleaning after eating and an earlier finish will enable further cleaning at the end of the day. Staff will need time after sessions to wipe down equipment and teachers will monitor distance learning for a period after pupils have left.

The one day when pupils do not attend allows staff to plan for teaching and distance learning. At the same time, a focussed clean of premises will take place.

Although breaks will be shorter, due to groups being smaller, there will be plenty of time planned for pupils to do activities linked to relaxation and wellbeing, such as mindfulness, relaxation, reflection and learning through games or outdoors. These activities, along with dedicated literacy and numeracy sessions, will give pupils a rounded, stimulating and enjoyable experience.

Will there be opportunities for transition activities?

We are working with Llanwern and other secondary schools and they will let us know how they can manage Year 6 transition this year. For example, Llanwern High school has already made contact with pupils and staff and asked for pupils' questions about their new school, shared a virtual tour and will send in key staff to meet the pupils when yr 6 are present.

For new Nursery and new Reception pupils we are looking into a visit for 'stay and play' sessions before term ends.

Will people other than school staff have access to the school building?

Access to the school building will be strictly controlled, other than school staff only those doing essential maintenance or those who have an urgent appointment arranged with the HT will have access to the building. Strict hygiene and social distancing protocol will be maintained.

Parents requiring home learning packs can make appointments to collect at the main entrance door. All other enquiries from parents will be dealt with via telephone or email.

No casual access what so ever.

Will Breakfast Club or after school clubs be running?

Unfortunately, due to cleaning arrangements and staff fully committed to other aspects of school at this time these clubs will not be running until further notice.