

9 June 2020

Update following Welsh Government proposals for schools

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you and your family are keeping well, healthy and happy, and were able to enjoy the Whitsun weekend.

We would like to update you on the emerging picture for Welsh Schools and our planning for this. We are being guided by Welsh Government, who have announced their proposals to start the next phase for Welsh schools **on the 29 June**. They have proposed a phased return with much smaller classes, and year groups having staggered starts, lessons and breaks.

Their aim is to provide secure, dedicated time with teachers and classmates - to include online and personalised classroom experience, getting children and teachers ready for a similar experience in September. Welsh Government have also announced an extended week for state schools this term, offset with an additional week holiday added to the Autumn half term break.

There will be further operational guidance from Welsh Government this week, including information on managing buildings, resources, cleaning and transport.

To support our comprehensive planning, we have been looking carefully at the emerging information from Welsh Government, and considering this alongside your feedback in our parents survey and advice from the Welsh Independent Schools Council, the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship and Early Years Wales, among other bodies.

In our parents' survey we asked parents how they felt about their child/ren returning to the School building from 29 June. The responses were as followed.

- **37%** would be happy to send their child back
- **17 %** would send their child back although they have some concerns they'd like addressing
- **9 %** would prefer to keep them home but would consider sending them back with reassurance from the School
- **20 %** were not sure they want their child returning to School from 29 June
- **17%** would not send their child back until September at the earliest
- Parents said their main concerns were maintaining adequate social distancing and hygiene measures, and whether the children would be negatively affected by these measures.

Taking parents views and all available advice into careful consideration, we have developed an outline plan of provision which we want to share with you as soon as possible. The detail will come later this week as Welsh Government outline their parameters and we adopt and adapt those for our context.

- We will be providing part-time, in-building provision for Kindergarten and all Classes from the week starting 29 June up to end of term on 10 July.
- A combination of different classes will attend on different days to ensure necessary social distancing and hygiene, both in the classrooms and around the School. The days for each class will be confirmed following further guidance from Welsh government.
- We will be integrating in-building provision with continued online provision in 'Beyond the Classroom'. This will ensure learning continues for children on the days their class are not timetabled in the building, and also for parents who choose to keep their child/ren at home.
- We will have a comprehensive risk management plan in place that will follow the 'bubble' model where 8 to 10 children will be together in a bubble with one or two members of staff exclusively. There will be daily cleaning of frequently touched areas and a whole building deep clean, provisionally planned for Wednesdays. Detailed risk management information will be sent to parents before 29 June.
- We will be integrating our provision for children of essential workers/vulnerable children into the whole school provision from 29 June. This means we will not be able to provide a separate provision (again to avoid cross-contamination) but will prioritise those children and ensure, where possible, that in-building provision for them coincides with their Classes' timetabled days.
- We will not be able to offer Wraparound Care (Breakfast Club, Afternoon Care and Afterschool Club) in this period, due to the need to keep children in separated cohorts and avoid cross-contamination when groups are mixed.
- We will not be extending our end of term date of 10 July - this is because:
 - In line with other independent schools, we have continued to offer a comprehensive programme of learning for students through our 'Beyond the Classroom' online learning, throughout the building closure
 - We need to support the wellbeing of our teaching and support staff who have been working through an extended period of sustained, high pressure challenge and change
 - We already have a two week half term break in Autumn 2020 and do not want to reduce learning time next year (see [term dates for 2020-21](#) here)

We are carrying out comprehensive planning and modelling as guidance develops and will keep you regularly updated following the further guidance. Central to our approach will be:

- the wellbeing of our pupils, staff and the School community
- the continuity of our educational programme
- ensuring as far as possible that all pupils are able to engage with the learning programme
- respect and support for each individual family to make the best decisions for themselves
- keeping alive the human connections between us as a community

While Welsh Government's guidance and advice will be of primary significance we would be happy to receive any further feedback that parents would like to share with us to have taken into account in our ongoing decision making. If you would like to do so please email this to parents@cardiffsteiner.org.uk

With thanks for your continued support.



Anna Podesta, Miranda Knight, Brigid Bowen
for College, the School Management Team and Trustees