

22 February 2021

Update to Parents

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you and your families are keeping well, healthy and happy. We are missing those of you who we haven't seen in person for too long.

You may have seen the announcement from Welsh Government on Friday of their aim for a phased return of all primary age pupils to in-building learning from Monday 15 March, along with students in exam years (Year 11 and 13 in state schools, our age Classes 10 and 12).

Welsh Government stated that this would be on a 'blended learning' basis, for example half a class in-building, with the other half learning simultaneously at home, and swapping mid-week.

The Welsh Government's next 21-day review is on Friday 12 March, and they have said they will confirm these plans during that week.

As part of our comprehensive planning we are looking carefully at the emerging information from Welsh Government, and considering this alongside advice from the Welsh Independent Schools Council, the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship and Early Years Wales, among other bodies.

We are planning, on the above basis, for our Classes 3/4 and 5/6 to return to the building from 15 March, along with Classes 9/10 and 11/12, as they are our students in the equivalent of exam years for the NZCSE, our Upper School qualification.

Unfortunately, Class 7/8 would not be able to return to the building on this basis, as they fall outside the age groups identified by Welsh Government, so would continue with their 'Beyond the Classroom' distance learning for the time being.

In respect of blended learning, this is intended to support schools with large pupil populations to allow all the identified pupils back some of the time, whilst still enabling social distancing on the school premises. In our context, with small numbers of pupils and large classrooms, this was not a necessary measure for us in the last phased return, and we anticipate the identified Classes will be able to return fully populated.

So, subject to confirmation from Welsh Government, our plans are as follows: Further detail will follow as Welsh Government outline their parameters and we adopt and adapt those for our context:

- **We are providing full time, in- building provision for all Kindergarten and Class Ty Haul** pupils from 22 February.
- **Older pupils** will continue with our online ‘Beyond the Classroom’ programme from 22 February.
- **From 15 March** the following Classes will return to the building (subject to confirmation in the Welsh Government review in the week starting 8 March).
 - **Class 3/4**
 - **Class 5/6**
 - **Class 9/10**
 - **Class 11/12**

Class 7/8 will continue with their ‘Beyond the Classroom’ distance learning until further guidance from Welsh Government on their safe return.

- We will continue to offer school day provision, as needed, to Class pupils who are classed as **vulnerable, or are children of essential workers**, from 8.50am to 3.30pm. ***NB** parents must request a space before attending - please see guidance on this at the end of this letter.
- **Wraparound Care** is operating normal hours (Breakfast Club 8.00-9.00, Afternoon Care 1.00-3.30, Afterschool 3.30-4.30/6.00) and is open to all pupils who are in-building as above. Children can be booked in for drop-in sessions or regular weekly bookings in Wraparound Care book at the normal rate by email or phone call to Nicola parents@cardiffsteiner.org.uk.

The starting point of in-building return is the wellbeing of our pupils, helping them ease out of lockdown with self-confidence and emotional resilience. We recognise that returning may cause anxiety for some pupils and parents. Children and young people will have experienced the disruption of routine and school structure and the impact of a long period at home which may have been difficult.

Teachers take a careful approach, focusing on creating a safe, secure and welcoming environment, supporting relationships, and facilitating communication and conversations that allow pupils to discuss their concerns in an age-appropriate way. From our previous experience we know that for many, simply engaging in meaningful learning experiences alongside their classmates, will support their well-being; helping them to feel a sense of purpose, progression, structure and enjoyment.

We will continue our comprehensive planning and modelling as guidance develops. A full risk assessment is in operation following the *Welsh Government Operational Guidance for Schools and Settings*. Measures are continually assessed and may change as we experience how they are working, and/or in line with changing guidance.

We want you, as parents, to have confidence in our approach, and invite you to speak to the following with any questions or concerns regarding:

- **Social Distancing and hygiene**- Miranda Knight, School Administrative Manager / Designated Safeguarding Lead / Health & Safety Lead
miranda.knight@cardiffsteiner.org.uk.

- **Concerns about your child's education or emotional wellbeing** - your child's Kindergarten/Class Teacher or Guardian and /or Miranda Knight
- **Anything else** - Nicola Robinson, School Administrative Assistant, parents@cardiffsteiner.org.uk

In order to keep our children, staff and our community safe, we would reinforce Welsh Government's advice to parents/carers to continue to be vigilant including - social distancing at the School gate, not permitting sleep overs or other household mixing outside of School, and not sending children to School if they have symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19.

Please follow national and local advice and keep us updated on any relevant developments in your family's health so that we can update our measures as necessitated by this. We will continue to give you information and advice as it is made available to us, and will do everything we can to support you and to help you support your children.

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

Thank you for your continued support.

Three handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is 'Miranda Knight', the second is 'Anna Podesta', and the third is 'Brigid Bowen'.

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

Social Distancing and Hygiene

Wales' Chief Medical Officer confirms that evidence suggests that schools have been successful in providing safe environments for children and teachers. The Welsh Government Technical Advisory Group also confirms that the most effective preventative measures are ones schools have already put in place, but are making recommendations to strengthen existing mitigating measures in light of the new variants, including offering lateral flow tests for all staff twice weekly to regularly and quickly identify positive asymptomatic cases.

A full risk assessment is in operation following the '**Welsh Government Operational Guidance for Schools and Settings**'. This guidance sets out the public health advice schools must follow to minimise the risks of COVID-19 transmission. It also includes the process that should be followed if anyone develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school. The guidance provides a set of principles to help schools and settings do this, and in turn minimise risks.

The guidance provides a framework for school leaders to put in place proportionate protective measures for children and staff but also enables learners to receive their education. It recognises that a school's context will determine how the combination of these measures are used to best effect to help minimise the risk of transmission in each individual setting. We have made judgments based on our particular school context about how to balance and minimise any risks from COVID-19 with providing a full educational experience for your children. The guidance is kept under constant review and will always follow the latest scientific advice. We will continue to follow the latest guidance as it is published.

What you need to know

Drop off and Pick Up

Pupils returning on 15 March will enter and leave the School building from separate entrances as we have done previously

- **Kindergarten** - through the willow arch – parents to space themselves along the front railings maintaining a strict 2 m distance
- **Class Ty Haul** - through the front playground and office entrance, parents may enter the playground with their child maintaining a strict 2m distance
- **Class 3/4** - rear playground and staff room entrance
- **Class 5/6** - rear playground and games cupboard entrance
- **Class 9/10** - front playground and annex front door
- **Class 11/12** - rear playground and French doors

Drop off

It is **vital that pupils arrive on time** so that we are able to effectively manage social distancing, so please allow plenty of time for parking etc. Please come to your designated entrance gate (maintaining a strict 2 metre distance from other pupils, families and passers-by). The teachers will take the pupils into School where they will be asked to wash their hands and get ready to start the day.

Pick up

Parents will be able to enter the front playgrounds at pick up but are asked to ensure they stand a strict 2 metres apart. The pupils will be lined up in the playground, or inside in inclement weather, prior to parents arriving and a member of staff will direct pupils to leave one at a time to greet their parents and leave. It is important that parents/carers leave the playground as soon

as they have picked up their child/ren and observe the strict 2 metre distancing with other families as, and after, they leave.

Travelling to School

If pupils need to take public transport, they **must follow government guidance and wear a facemask**. Walking and cycling to school is to be encouraged. The normal bike racks are available but pupils should ensure social distancing when locking up their bikes.

Parking

As many local residents are still off work, parking around the School is extremely limited at the moment. We therefore encourage you to use Hailey Park Car Park or Llandaff train station to leave your car when dropping off and picking up. Because some pupils and families will be spacing themselves around the gates in the mornings, we ask you **not to stop and drop your child on the single yellow lines** around the School to ensure the safety of our families and the local community.

Food and dress

Please make sure that your child has their own food, plenty for morning snack and lunch, and utensils to eat it with. Please make sure that your child is **dressed warmly**. Ventilation is a key theme in the approach to lessening the transmission opportunities for the virus and the windows of the classrooms will be open throughout the day. If you can provide a hot soup or a hot drink in a flask they would probably appreciate this.

Keeping you safe and informed

If your child is feeling unwell for whatever reason, then they should not come into School. This is even more important if your child is showing COVID-19 symptoms.

It is essential that children do not attend if they or a member of their household has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) or is self-isolating.

Please see the latest Welsh government guidance here gov.wales/coronavirus and Welsh Government [advice on self-isolating here](#). This applies to:

- people who have received a positive test result for COVID-19
- people with symptoms of COVID-19 who are waiting for a test result, or who have not been tested and do not require hospital treatment, who must remain at home for the appropriate self-isolation period (further details below)
- people living in households with someone who shows symptoms that may be caused by COVID-19 or who has received a positive test result for COVID-19
- people of all ages including children

The most important symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of any of the following:

- a new continuous cough
- a high temperature
- a loss of, or change in, your normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia)

For most people, coronavirus (COVID-19) will be a mild illness. However, if you have any of the symptoms above you must stay at home and arrange to have a test to see if you have COVID-19. See information on [Testing and tracing for coronavirus](#)

Information on Essential Workers & Vulnerable Children

It is important that we all do what we need to do to reduce the spread of Coronavirus, but we also recognise our responsibility to enable front line workers to do their jobs. In these hugely challenging times, Schools are an essential part of the effort to respond to keeping the NHS running as well as other services which are vital to how we live.

The government has given clear guidance on self-isolation, household isolation and social distancing and the scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

It is important to underline that Welsh Government consider that schools remain safe places for children. But the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society

That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend as a last resort. Many parents working in these essential sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

- **If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.**
- If a child is vulnerable or has a parent who is critical to the Covid-19 response, then provision should be available for them.
- Where one parent is a critical worker and the other parent is not, then the other parent should provide safe alternative arrangements at home when possible.
- Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
- Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.

We are running a small, necessary provision for our pupils who are vulnerable or are children of parents of 'essential workers' - those whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response. You can see a [list of 'essential workers' here](#). **Vulnerable children** include those with safeguarding needs and supported by social care, which include children with care and support or support plans, children on the child protection register and looked after children, young carers, disabled children and those with Statements of special educational needs.

The service is available for these pupils from from 8.50am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday. They can also be booked into Wraparound Care at the normal rate by email or phone call to Nicola parents@cardiffsteiner.org.uk

An appropriate provision and rhythm is developed for the pupils. Pupils attending will be participating in their remote learning programme and will be supported to access this along with their classmates, and should bring a suitable device with them for this (please let us know if this is difficult for you there may be another child from their Class attending who they can share with).

REQUESTING A SPACE IS ESSENTIAL

All pupils who are vulnerable or are children of parents of 'essential workers' **MUST** first **REQUEST A SPACE** using our booking form. If you are eligible and likely to need to use this provision please contact Nicola by email to parents@cardiffsteiner.org.uk

Depending on the numbers of children requesting provision, and staffing available, then decisions on attendance may need to be prioritised in line with Welsh Government guidance.