



# **Blackwood Comprehensive School**

## **Ysgol Gyfun y Coed Duon**

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**Ymdrech I Drechu – Strive To Succeed**

Dear Parents, Carers and Pupils

### **Return to School: Welcome Back**

**14<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

We hope you and your families are all safe and well.

We wrote to you last week and promised that we would give you more details regarding our arrangements once we had received further guidance from the Welsh Government. As you know, the Education Minister outlined that schools in Wales could partially open from June 29<sup>th</sup> to July 27<sup>th</sup>, if it was safe to do so. We believe that we can reopen safely but, when we return, school will look very different, with pupils continuing with a blend of distance learning alongside some contact time in school. Welsh Government has said that they expect this model to continue for the foreseeable future, into September and the autumn term.

The unique layout of our school means that we believe the school can safely return by accommodating a year group at a time, keeping them in small 'bubbles' within tutor groups. There will be two or three 'bubbles' per tutor group, depending on numbers attending. This will ensure that both staff and pupils are exposed to as few people as possible, therefore minimising risk. We will be running a Check in, Catch up and Prepare recovery curriculum which will focus on supporting pupils' wellbeing and also help them to develop the resilience and independence they need for this new blended learning.

Parents/carers must confirm their child's attendance seven days prior to their designated day in school; we will be sending out a survey each week. To ensure the safety of the school community pupils will not be accommodated without prior arrangement, so it is vital that you let us know in advance. Whilst we already have an idea of numbers from our initial survey, we can now share further details with you to help you with your decision making.

### **School Meals**

While this is the responsibility of the Local Authority (LA), I need to make you aware that there will be no canteen facilities available in school for the 4 weeks that we are back in school, for either pupils or staff. All pupils and staff will be expected to bring their own snacks and drinks for break, although the LA will provide cereal bars for pupils. Pupils who receive free school meals will continue to have the delivery to their homes, so that pupils can have a hot meal in the evening. There will be additional items in the delivery to help with break.

### **School Transport**

Whilst school transport is also the responsibility of the LA and not the school, I know that this will be an important factor in the decision making for some parents and carers. The LA has made it clear that, where possible, there is an expectation that parents and carers will transport their own children to school; however school transport is available for those who use it. We have included a question in our survey regarding this and we would ask you to let us know as soon as possible if you need it. Pupils who use the school bus from Markham will be in a 'bubble' of their own, rather than with their tutor group.

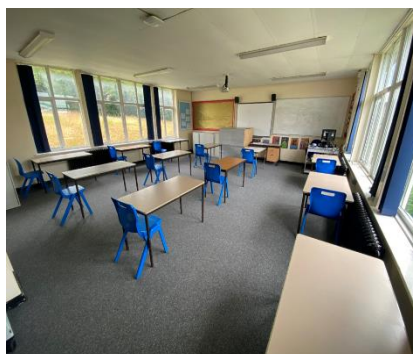
## School Model

We will be following the Public Health Wales (PHW) Guidance for Corona Virus (Covid-19) when we return to school. This includes:

- Strict reinforcement of strict social distancing and rigorous hygiene practices;
- Two metre social distancing, which includes two metre spacings clearly identifying safe social distancing whilst lining up, and classrooms set up to ensure a 2 metre distance between each desk;
- PPE will be worn only when dealing with symptomatic cases or providing close, personal care such as first aid;
- The Youth Service Hall will be used as the waiting area for COVID symptomatic pupils;
- To ensure the safety of the school community, any pupil not following instructions and PHW guidance will be removed from their 'bubble' and parents/carers will be contacted to pick them up.

We will only be using the outer blocks as classrooms; main block will not be open to pupils. Nearly all of these blocks are self-contained and have their own toilet and handwashing facilities. There will be additional hand sanitising units in the foyer of each block. Classrooms have already been set up to ensure a safe distance between desks and we would ask that pupils bring their own pen, pencil and ruler to school. However, we will be providing exercise books, but these will need to be looked after by pupils and brought in to school for each of their sessions. Pupils will not be wearing their uniform but should instead wear their PE kits.

Photographs which illustrate the layout of the classrooms are below.



Pupils will have their break on the grassed areas outside their blocks and will need to remain in their 'bubble' for its duration.

The school will have a thorough clean at the end of each day and will be closed for a focused clean on Friday.

## School timings

Pupils will have a staggered arrival and finish time, but the school day will start at 8:30am and end at 1:00pm, subject to buses. Pupils will arrive and leave via the front and back gates as necessary. Pupils who use the Markham bus must arrive and leave via the back gate. Staff will be in attendance to greet pupils and ensure social distancing is maintained

Pupils will return to school according to the following rota:

PUPILS	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Year 10	In school	At home, distance learning	At home, distance learning	At home, distance learning	At home, distance learning
Year 9	At home, distance learning	At home, distance learning	At home, distance learning	In school	At home, distance learning
Year 8	At home, distance learning	At home, distance learning	In school	At home, distance learning	At home, distance learning
Year 7	At home, distance learning	In school	At home, distance learning	At home, distance learning	At home, distance learning

We hope this information has helped you to make an informed decision about returning to school. We know that some of you may be anxious about sending your child back to us and that there will also be pupils who are nervous. This is understandable. We will work together as a school community to support and reassure them, whether they have concerns about their safety, wellbeing or academic studies. We have missed them and look forward to seeing them again.

Take care and stay safe.

Kind regards



Jane Wilkie

Headteacher/Pennaeth



Andrew Farina-Childs

Chair of the Governing Body