



# St. Joseph's RC High School

## Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig Joseff Sant

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**Headteacher/Pennaeth:** Mrs J Jarrett BA(Hons) M.A NPQH

26 June 2020

Dear parents and carers

### **Re: Measures taken to open school safely**

On Wednesday 3rd June 2020, the Education Minister announced her intention for schools in Wales to increase operations following the period of forced school closure. The "Check in; Catch up; Prepare" phase will take effect from Monday 29 June 2020.

For the remainder of the academic year, the school will provide some face-to-face support to supplement the distance learning for all pupils, which is likely to remain the predominant mode of education for some time.

Whilst returning to school from Monday 29 June is voluntary, to reassure all parents and carers now and moving forward, I thought it was important to share with you how school will operate in the period between 29 June and 17 July.

Whilst being able to open our gates again to pupils brings all the staff at St Joseph's great excitement, I recognise that a return to the physical school site next week or in September will be difficult for some pupils and staff who will have experienced a range of challenges during the last few months. I also understand that pupils, parents/carers and staff may feel apprehensive about the risks. However, let me assure you, the provision has been made far safer through adherence to the published government guidelines. These include social distancing, hygiene and self-isolation of those showing symptoms, or living with someone showing symptoms. This will minimise the risk of transmission of infection. I anticipate that we will need to review our provision in readiness for September and we will continue to reflect changes as Welsh Government assessments are made.

I apologise that this letter is detailed but it is vital that we reopen the school now and in the future in a safe and controlled manner, so please do take the time to read through this letter with your child.

In this letter I have outlined:

1. Control measures we have put in place to reduce the risks of spreading COVID - 19 between persons at school
2. Expectations of pupils

#### **1. Control measures**

Please be assured that a comprehensive assessment of the risks associated with COVID - 19 has been undertaken. Control measures have been introduced in order to limit these risks. However, it is important that all members of the school community adhere to these measures in order to lower the risk of transmission of the virus. Please read these control measures and ensure that your child understands them.

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- **Attendance**

In helping us to safeguard your child, we will be maintaining a record of attendance and we ask that families who have indicated their intention to send their child, notify the school if their child is unable to attend. Please be aware that for some pupils, it is still not safe to attend school. A summary of these can be accessed [here](#). Also remember that **you must not, under any circumstances, send your child to school if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19:**

- Feeling unwell
- Have any of the three identified COVID-19 symptoms (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of taste or smell)
- Have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days
- Live in a household with someone who has symptoms of COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days

- **Entrance and exit of the school site**

The entrance and exit to the site will be strictly controlled. Only essential visitors, including parents, will be allowed on site. If you are driving your child to school, please do not use the car park. You will be directed to the bus bays where a member of staff will coordinate the safe drop-off and pick up of your child. It is important that pupils follow the designated routes given to help keep others safe. When on site, pupils will not be permitted to leave and return to the site until the end of their allocated time.

Where possible, I would encourage pupils to walk or cycle to school, while avoiding public transport during peak times. If your child is intending on using public transport please refer to the local authority and/or government guidance that can be found [here](#).

- **Physical environment**

To avoid the risk of transmission from room to room and to keep the number of people each person comes into contact with to a minimum, the school has been organised into zones and 'bubbles'. Classes will become 'bubbles' with no more than 10 pupils. Everyday your child attends school, they will remain in their zone and their 'bubble' as well as at the same desk. 'Bubbles' within each zone will gain access to their rooms using designated stairwells and they will use designated toilet facilities. 'Bubbles' will not work together throughout their time on site; they will have staggered start and finish times. Regrettably, there will be limited contact with other pupils, in order to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus.

Each 'bubble' will have an allocated member of staff who, as far as possible, will remain with them until the end of term. However, the intention is that subject teachers will rotate to the different rooms within identified zones. The rooms which have been chosen for use are large enough to ensure social distancing in line with guidance. Where classrooms are used, the doors will remain open to prevent unnecessary repeated contact.

- **Social distancing**

The school has taken steps to ensure social distancing arrangements are in place and supported. The school's expectations around social distancing adhere to Welsh Government guidance. The guidance can be accessed [here](#). We have developed our measures to help keep pupils, staff, and their families safe and well. Visual displays will be a noticeable addition to the school site upon its phased re-opening from 29 June. To reduce the risk of transmission, the distribution of staff to a zone, working directly with 'bubbles' in this zone, will limit interactions with the wider school community and helps minimise the risk of transmission between groups. As far as is reasonably practicable, the school expects pupils to maintain 2 metre social distance when entering or exiting the school site. Parents/carers who are driving their child on to the school site will not be permitted to get out of their vehicles.

- **The school day**

Year groups have been allocated set days to attend school and the school has been organised into zones with a designated toilet, entrance and exit. Pupils have been placed in 'bubbles' with a staggered start and finish time to enable safe entry and exit from the site.

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The school realises that the wellbeing of pupils and staff is paramount. During the coming weeks and months, pupils and staff are more likely to be anxious and their health and wellbeing is more likely to be impacted by the changes of routine and the implications of lockdown. Over time, pupils and staff are also more likely to encounter instances of serious illness and bereavement. Therefore, to help cope with these additional pressures, a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing will form a daily part of the curriculum to provide the necessary support and guidance. If your child requires more intensive and/or specialist support, please let the school know so that we can coordinate this via external services.

- **Cleaning the site**

The 'cleaning of non-healthcare settings' guidance is understood by the relevant staff and will be followed at all times. The guidance can be accessed [here](#). We have ensured that extra cleaning staff are available all day in all the designated zones. The building will be cleaned regularly and at least once a day. Hard surfaces will be cleaned with warm soapy water and then disinfected with the cleaning products normally used. Particular attention will be given to the cleaning of 'high-touch' areas and surfaces, which will be cleaned more frequently than normal, including toilets, railings, tables, equipment and door handles. Our cleaning staff will be expected to maintain social distancing from each other and from teaching/support staff and pupils at all times. Tissues will be placed in a separate waste bin and disposed of safely. The school will double-bag waste in line with latest guidance and ensure it is removed daily. If any waste is suspected of being in contact with someone showing symptoms of COVID-19, it will be placed in a waste bag, held in a secure place for 72 hours then disposed of as other waste is. Our site manager will ensure that the cleaning team fully understands the cleaning requirements and will ensure that they have appropriate training, products and equipment available in a timely manner.

- **Hygiene expectations**

The school will ensure that all staff and pupils are made aware of the importance of regularly washing their hands. Specifically, that hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Staff will also ensure pupils are reminded of effective handwashing techniques, as highlighted by the National Health Service guidance. This guidance can be accessed [here](#). For clarity, this advice will be displayed around the school on posters. Handwashing is considered more effective than the use of hand sanitizers. Therefore, regular hand washing opportunities have been included in the sessions your child will experience. However, hand sanitizers have been installed to increase opportunities for pupils and staff to maintain high standards of personal hygiene. However, pupils may wish to carry their own personal hand sanitizer. Pupils should cough into their elbow. In so far as it is possible, pupils should be encouraged not to touch their face, especially when using a tissue or elbow to cough. While the school will reinforce good personal hygiene habits, the support of families at home to instil the importance of these practices is crucial to reducing risk of transmission.

- **Face coverings**

The Chief Medical Officer for Wales has issued guidance on the use of face coverings for the purpose of COVID-19. The school will follow this guidance. As a result, it will not supply face coverings beyond the use of personal protective equipment, when required. However, the school recognises that pupils and staff may wish to wear a face covering if this supports their wellbeing and confidence. In this situation, the face covering should be worn to cover the mouth and nose. Face coverings may not be transferred between individuals and non-disposable face coverings should be stored in a plastic bag when not used.

- **Uniform**

In light of the most recent guidance, we have taken the decision that for the remainder of the academic year, pupils will not be required to wear school uniform when they attend school. In line with health advice, students should wear something that is comfortable and easily washable. Any clothing which cannot be machine washed should be avoided.

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- **Emergencies, accidents and first aid**

On site each day, there will be named members of staff who are qualified in first aid. In the event of an accident at school, the same procedures that were being operated before school closure will apply. However, where a pupil requires first aid, staff members must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (gloves; face mask; goggles and/or face-shield) whilst administering treatment.

## 2. Expectations of pupils

- **Control measures**

All pupils will have read and discussed with their parents or carers the importance of adhering to the control measures we have put in place.

- **Resources**

As far as possible, there will be no shared resources. Your child will be expected to bring:

- Writing equipment: pen, pencil, ruler, eraser, and any additional equipment they may need for specific subjects such as mathematics. No equipment can be loaned to pupils.
- Water to drink and a small healthy snack to be eaten after session 2 when pupils have washed their hands.
- Subject books or paper for their allocated lessons (see timetable below)
- Pupils must ensure that they take all of their belongings home at the end of their session.

- **Behaviour**

Naturally, I trust families will appreciate that where a pupil is unable to follow these safety measures then the school will have to assess suitability of provision.

I cannot emphasise enough how important it is that everyone follows the guidelines at school. This includes staff, who will need to model these behaviours. It will be tough, I am certain. However, collectively, I am sure we can do it.

Thank you for your support and cooperation to date, and for the coming weeks and months.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jarrett



Mrs Jarrett  
Headteacher

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