



Dear Parent/Guardian

The first week has flown by and the school feels its soul has returned now that it is once again full of pupils. Many pupils have settled in again enjoying the opportunity to see, work and play with their friends. The process of returning to school has appeared in the press from the perspective of some pupils ([Disgyblion ar draws Cymru yn dychwelyd i'r ysgol - BBC Cymru Fyw](#)) and staff ([Disgyblion "wedi ymateb yn dda i sefyllfa anodd" wrth dychwelyd i'r ysgol – Golwg360](#)).

## Keeping Safe

A number of actions to avoid COVID are still active in the school. The key ones that have been a part of school life since September and these remain a key part of our COVID response, including:

- Keeping in class or year bubbles,
- Regular hand washing or sanitising, especially when entering the premises and before eating
- Checking temperature at the start of the day
- Reporting the symptoms and isolating if you have any one from a high temperature, persistent cough or loss of taste or smell.

The water fountains are switched off so it is important that pupils bring a water bottle and as the weather warms up it may be necessary to consider using a larger bottle.

## LFT Tests

We have not yet received the new supply of LFT tests for pupils in years 7-9. We will distribute these to pupils who have returned consent forms as soon as the tests are received.

## Project Vote

The Children's Commissioner for Wales is running 'project Vote' with a parallel election for 11 to 15 year old school pupils across Wales. Sixth formers and many year 11 pupils can vote in the parliamentary election so will not be part of the project. Over the coming weeks there will be opportunities for pupils to learn about different party policies and principles as part of the process. Today's children are the future of our country and this will also be an opportunity for parents to discuss politics with their children. Pupils will receive a link to vote online and the Children's Commissioner for Wales will publish the national results.

## Assessments

Assessments for year 11-13 pupils have begun. In order to try and ensure time for pupils to settle in there are fewer assessments in the first few weeks and more at the end of April and during May. We have tried to spread the assessments as much as possible but it is not possible to avoid some more busy periods. We apologize for this, but if you are concerned about your child it is important to discuss this with the progress and wellbeing leaders.

To try to help pupils who are under pressure we have arranged a virtual session with the University of South Wales. This is for year 11-13 pupils and parents on Tuesday next week at 17:00, focusing on maintaining wellbeing during exam / assessment periods. The link is [here](#).

### ***"Mental Health and Wellbeing (bilingual)***

*The session has been created by the university Student Ambassador manager so that it is relevant to school pupils, with input from undergraduate students as well.*

*This session aims to provide the mechanisms to help you maintain your mental health and well-being during your studies, including the experiences of current undergraduate students.”*

## Looking forwards

We have spent a lot of time dealing with the current challenges, but it is important that we plan for the next steps.

### Year 7-9

We have taught year 7-9 pupils in the same rooms to keep the bubbles separate. To begin to extend pupils' experiences we are now beginning to move the pupils for some practical lessons. This may include some outdoor lessons, but in order to use some specialist rooms, for example for ICT, pupils will need to 'wipedown' the equipment before using it.

### Year 9

Year 9 have been given an options booklet and have had the opportunity to give us a rough idea of their choices. The year 9 parents evening has also given you the opportunity to discuss ideas with the teachers.

We will be conducting the formal options process over the coming weeks. This will include:

- Sharing recorded presentations by subject leaders to supplement the information contained in the booklet that has already been distributed.
- Sharing the option columns.
- Holding a series of subject sessions for those who want to know a bit more about specific subjects.

Pupils who find the selection process difficult will be able to receive additional advice if they contact the progress and wellbeing leader.

### Year 11

Year 11 have received some information about the options available at the school, including an options booklet and an opportunity to give us a brief overview of their choices. We will be asking for more information on their intentions over the coming weeks to ensure they are properly supported for the next stage in their lives, whatever their chosen path.

This year we have expanded our provision to respond to the voice of the pupil, with new courses in psychology, politics and criminology available to our sixth form students. The process of applying for a sixth-form place and making final choices will be earlier this year. Pupils receive their provisional grades during June and this will enable us to carry out the admissions processes before the summer holidays.

We understand that year 11 pupils have missed out on much in the last two years. They will have the opportunity to receive subject support for a number of their subject choices in school sessions during June and July. By increasing the cultural and social experiences available to pupils when COVID regulations allow we will support their social and personal development and wider skills which are key to developing the whole person. Our program for pupils who should consider the most competitive universities will also begin during this period.

Pupils who find the selection process difficult may be able to receive additional advice if they contact the progress and wellbeing leader.

### Sixth form

Many universities run taster sessions on a variety of subjects. These virtual sessions are an opportunity for pupils to find out what is available for further study. These sessions include:

Swansea University: "Current News" series over the next month on a variety of topics including 'Drugs in Sport', 'Black holes' and 'Should we be able to shut people down?'. The full list and method of registration is available [here](#):

**Swansea Univeristy:** [Weminarau a Sesiynau ar Bwnc Penodol - Prifysgol Abertawe \(swansea.ac.uk\)](https://www.swansea.ac.uk)

**Aberystwyth University and the Coleg Cymraeg:** Psychology Conference on 28th April. The seminars are aimed at university students but there will be an opportunity in the afternoon to see the career opportunities available in the field. [Cynhadledd Seicoleg POSTER \(adnoddau.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](https://adnoddau.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com)

Once again I would like to say thank you for all your support during the lockdown period and look forward to welcoming you back to the school site when COVID regulations allow.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rhodri Thomas', written in a cursive style.

Dr Rhodri Thomas  
(Headteacher)