

09/12/20

Dear Parent / Guardian,

I would like to thank you as parents for your continued support for us as a school during this difficult time, including ensuring that your child follows the key Covid safety measures that are in place inside and outside of school. In line with the Welsh Government's message, we all need to continue to make wise decisions about not mixing outside our households in our free time for the benefit of all who are part of our school community and beyond.

As you can see on [this link](#), the Welsh Government has decided to change and reduce the self-isolation period from 14 days to 10 days from tomorrow. For us, this means the need to consider adjusting the isolation periods for pupils in years 8 and 10 at present.

As I am sure you are aware, the pressure on Bryn Tawe's staffing levels, as in many other schools, is reaching very worrying levels. Ensuring the safe running of the school for pupils attending and continuing to provide live distance learning is becoming more challenging due to staff absences. An increasing number of Bryn Tawe staff have tested positive, are isolating while waiting for tests, and also face childminding difficulties. This is in addition to sickness absences other than Covid, as we see annually at this time of year, as well as the current lack of availability of supply teachers.

In light of the above, it will not be possible for us to invite year 10 back to school tomorrow because of our current staffing levels. We will therefore **continue to provide daily distance learning lessons for year 10 pupils for tomorrow and Friday, with everyone returning on Monday 14/12/20**. Due to known staffing pressures early next week, we will **keep to the original date for year 8 to return on Wednesday the 16/12/20**. This will allow us to maintain safe staffing levels in the school, as it currently stands.

I would like to emphasise that the current staffing situation changes on a daily basis and sometimes by the hour. It is therefore very difficult to ensure that we are not forced to consider asking certain year groups to move to distance learning for periods before the end of the term. We understand how inconvenient this is for our parents and any decisions will be communicated clearly and as soon as we can.

In addition, a number of our parents have been contacting us to discuss keeping their child away from school up until Christmas. We fully sympathise with our parents' position in these cases where the intention is to protect more vulnerable or older relatives through isolating before Christmas. We understand the rationale here, but we cannot as a school formally authorise such absences (see [this letter](#) from Swansea's Acting Director of Education). However, we will not take any follow-up action or penalise pupils who do not attend for this reason. We will not be able to provide live lessons in these instances, but work will be available for all pupils on Teams.

We will contact pupils' parents as soon as possible if we need to make the difficult decision of moving to distance learning with certain year groups. In the meantime, if you wish to discuss any matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,





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