

Update

On 19 October, we were informed by Welsh Government of how their decisions relating to COVID-19 restrictions would affect schools. They have directed that from Monday, 2 November 2020, secondary schools will be open for children in Years 7 and 8 only, whilst other pupils will continue their learning from home for that week. Therefore, Years 7 and 8 will continue with face-to-face lessons and attend school as normal during the week. Years 9 -13 will work from home and not attend school unless they are due to sit any formal university entrance examinations.

Years 7 and 8 will have the opportunity in school to develop their experience with blended learning by engaging with the Literacy and Numeracy Remembrance Challenge which can be accessed via the Literacy and Numeracy Google Classroom.

No pupils will be in school on Friday, 6 November 2020 and Monday, 9 November 2020 as they are designated INSET days. These INSET days will go ahead as planned. Therefore, the school will be closed on these days to all pupils for staff training. The INSET day dates have been communicated to parents and carers previously. Consequently, Year 9 - 13 pupils will miss a maximum of 20 hours of direct face-to-face teaching time with teachers during the coronavirus "firebreak".

Welsh Government guidance (Schools: coronavirus firebreak guidance) issued on 22/10/20 outlines the reasons for schools remaining open for only Years 7 and 8. This guidance states that "the older children in secondary and further education are more likely to be able to safely continue their learning at home as well as being more able to self direct their learning".

Arrangements for working at home: Years 9 -13 Monday, 2 November - Thursday, 5 November 2020

Since Tuesday of this week, teachers have been working with pupils in Years 9 -13 to ensure that they are prepared for their working at home days. Teachers will have set a variety of work for pupils to address whilst at home. This might take the form of paper based work, or through online assignments and work set through Google Classroom. Welsh Government guidance (22/10/20) states that "All learners not in school should be provided with sufficient and appropriate work to ensure they continue their learning during the 2 November week, but only from 2 November."

As such, the following arrangements will be implemented from the start of day Monday, 2 November 2020.

- Although Welsh Government guidance issued 22/10/20 states that "Remote learning does not require that existing lesson times are honoured as in school", Cowbridge pupils working from home should follow their normal daily timetable during the four days. This will allow an appropriate learning routine to be maintained. For Years 9 - 11 this will take the form of 5 periods during each day. Sixth form students will have fewer timetabled lessons each day but should use the additional time to complete relevant work and consolidate learning and understanding.
- Pupils working from home will be able to access work for each lesson through Google Classroom or complete work set previously in the run up to the "firebreak". Such work might include, but will not be restricted to, structured tasks; self directed learning experiences; research tasks; examination question completion; reading tasks;

accurate note taking tasks; essay completion; using video extracts to enhance learning; or, using recordings of teachers delivering video extracts/voice overs, to motivate and engage learners.

- Work for many online lessons will be 'released' at the scheduled lesson time. If work has been released and provided in advance, all pupils will be reminded that teachers are available at the scheduled time.
- During each timetabled lesson, subject teachers will be available online in school for the duration of the lesson. During this time teachers will be able to offer help, instruction, guidance, clarification and feedback related to the work set.
- Pupils can use the private comments section under each assignment or material set on Google Classroom to communicate with their teachers. Pupils can also email teachers directly (using only their school email address) if there is any problem communicating using Google Classroom.
- Teachers will provide enough time to complete most work during each lesson, with the possible exception of limited homework to consolidate learning.
- Lessons where teachers are available on line will start and end promptly. Pupils may have some homework to complete at the end of the day, consistent with usual homework demands.
- Learning resources will remain in Google Classroom for pupils to access following the lesson, for those who are unable to follow the timetable due to home circumstances.
- We understand that there may be technical obstacles preventing engagement with online learning. If you are aware of such obstacles, please contact the school to let us know.

More information on blended learning can be found on the school website.

During the autumn term to date, a number of pupils have been required to self isolate due to COVID-19 related issues. During this time teachers in school were able to deliver a number of real time, live online lessons to pupils in Years 11 - 13 through Google video conferencing facilities. We were able to offer this provision as:

- the numbers of pupils involved were relatively small;
- sufficient numbers of teachers were available at specific times to allow for 2 teachers to staff each individual live online lesson. This complied with requirements as outlined in the Welsh Government publication 'Live-streaming and video-conferencing: safeguarding principles and practice - September 2020';
- sufficient video conferencing equipment was available to enable this provision to be offered (computers with speakers, microphones and cameras);

- sufficient ICT capacity, in terms of the school's infrastructure, was available to support the live streaming of lessons.

However, during the 4 day coronavirus "firebreak", we will not be able to deliver "live" online lessons, as the circumstances outlined above will not be applicable. Live online lessons are often not the most appropriate learning experience. This is due to issues some students may have with Wi-Fi; sharing devices within the home; and, home situations inconsistent with synchronous (live) learning. Furthermore, pupils cannot review live lessons later because we cannot record lessons where pupils are involved. Finally, the capacity of the network (and staffing) will not support live synchronous lessons across the school to over 1000 pupils at any given time as our infrastructure was never designed to deliver live streamed lessons on this scale.

Pupils are reminded that they can and should contact their teachers for support if required during the scheduled lesson times.

For your information, please see below the slightly amended lesson times which will apply from Monday November 2 2020.

08:30 - 08:45 - arrival of pupils on site (facilitates staggered start)

08:45 - 09:10 Registration - Teachers formal start time

09:10 - 10:10 Lesson 1

10:10 - 11 :30 Lesson 2

- 10:10 - 10:30 Y7 & 12 break
- 10:40 - 11:00 Y8 & 9 break
- 11:10 - 11:30 Y10, 11 & 13 break

11:30 - 12:30 Lesson 3

12:30 - 14:00 Lesson 4

- 12:30 - 13:00 Y7 & 12 lunch
- 13:00 - 13:30 Y8 & 9 lunch
- 13:30 - 14:00 Y10, 11 & 13 lunch

14:00 - 15:00 Lesson 5

We wish all pupils and families a restful half term holiday and look forward to seeing all pupils returning to school on Tuesday, November 10 2020.