

Parentmail Yr12 & 13 Update 22.11.21

Dear Parent/Carer

Impact of Covid-19 on staffing levels in school

In our last 2 Parentmail updates, we informed you that staff illness and Welsh Government Covid-19 isolation regulations were having a considerable impact on staffing levels in school.

We have been managing to cope with these impacts and have maintained face to face teaching for all year groups. However as outlined previously the situation is becoming increasingly difficult to manage. We are now at a stage where we need to implement contingency plans to ensure that most pupils continue to attend school as normal until the last day of term (Thursday 16 December). Friday 17 December is a designated INSET day and as such the School will be closed to all pupils on this day.

Therefore the measures below will be implemented.

1. Year 12 and 13 mock exams

Students in the above year groups will not sit traditional mock exams this December. These will be postponed.

The School has to comply with Public Health Wales guidance which tells schools to avoid large gatherings of people for prolonged periods of time. This would apply to conducting examinations in the Sports Hall with up to 200 pupils present for up to 2 hours at a time.

Uncertainty also remains regarding the status of external exams in 2022. Welsh Government and Qualifications Wales have yet to decide whether these exams will go ahead or not. The School will have to react quickly to the final decision regarding these exams. This decision will have an impact on the precise timing and nature of mock exams.

Therefore, formal mocks will be held later in the academic year in the spring term (probably 4 to 6 weeks before the start of formal external exams if they go ahead). However, the exact nature of the mock exams will be dependent on:

- the public health situation;
- Public Health Wales guidance; and
- decisions made by Qualifications Wales regarding 2022 exams.

However, as part of the School's 2022 examinations contingency plan, students will continue to sit in-class assessments during December which may count as "evidence" should the 2022 exam season be cancelled. The nature of these in-class assessments will be dependent on the requirements of individual subject areas.

2. Last week of term: week commencing 13 December 2021 - Years 12 and 13

During the last week of term (4 school days), Years 12 and 13 will work at home during a designated **Reading, Research and Revision** week.

This will involve all students learning and revising from home. They will be expected to complete assigned work (paper based or on Google Classroom) to read, research and revise for examinations/ assessments after the Christmas period. This will emulate a university "reading week" where students have time to reflect, consolidate information, complete relevant assignments and revise for examinations. The 4 days concerned cannot be viewed as an early start to the Christmas holidays. Students will receive clear and specific guidance from teachers about what is expected of them and what work they will need to complete.

Individual or small groups of students may be invited to attend school by teachers in order to discuss work and/or to provide additional tuition and support. This could also be done online at the discretion of staff and in the interests of students.

Thank you for your support and understanding as we continue to manage the unprecedented impacts on the School's staffing levels caused by the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Regards,
Cowbridge Comprehensive School Senior Leadership Team.