

September 2020: Organisational Arrangements for Cowbridge Comprehensive School

Introduction

The Minister for Education announced on 9 July 2020, that **all learners** would return to school in the autumn term of 2020. The Welsh Technical Advisory Group (TAG), which provides scientific and technical advice to Government during emergencies, recommends that schools “plan to open in September with 100% of pupils physically present on school sites, subject to a continuing, steady decline in the presence of COVID-19 in the community.”

From the second week of term it is expected that schools and settings will need to maximise the number of learners in attendance leading to a full return from the 14 September 2020, at the latest, when school attendance will be compulsory for all pupils.

Although all pupils will be expected to return on this date, the situation is far from ‘business as normal’ and there is an expectation that schools operate high levels of control to keep all staff and pupils as safe as practicably possible.

Cowbridge Comprehensive School must comply with **health and safety law, which requires us to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures**. This includes the need to review thoroughly our health and safety risk assessments, in collaboration with our staff and trade unions, and draw up plans for the autumn term that address the risks identified, using the system of controls set out below.

Essential measures include:

- a requirement that people who are unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 stay at home;
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene, including ventilation;
- continue increased cleaning arrangements;
- active engagement with Test, Trace, Protect;
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.

At CCS, this will include:

- a clear seating plan which is mirrored, as far as practicably possible, in each classroom;
- grouping learners together;
- avoiding contact between groups as much as possible;
- arranging classrooms with forward facing desks, as far as practicably possible;
- staff maintaining distance from learners and other staff as much as possible;
- highly structured and zoned areas of the yard and canteen to avoid different groups being defined as close contacts. This will also include vertical age groups to minimise social age contacts and enable the spread of pupils across the site, e.g. spreading the Sixth Form pupils across the 3 lunch breaks, will minimise the number of pupils in the dining hall.

As part of planning for a full return in the autumn term, it is a legal requirement for us to revisit and update risk assessments, by building on the learning to date and the practices already developed.

Risk Assessments

Detailed and comprehensive risk assessments have been conducted and communicated, as part of the partial return in the summer term.

We will consult with staff as part of our ongoing assessment for September full return, to ensure everyone's needs are understood and accounted for. This risk assessment will address the following areas of risk:

- safety of the school premises;
- cleaning measures;
- infection control and the ability to implement protective measures, e.g. social distancing;
- supporting staff and pupil wellbeing;
- supporting pupils' learning;
- safeguarding;
- communication of plans and procedures.

A copy of the School's main Risk Assessments will be available for all stakeholders should they request them. This involves a Staff RA, a Safe Operation of the Site RA and a Pupil RA. These will be published on the school's website.

Pupil groups

The return to school in September will be identified **by contacting parents via Parentmail**. To reduce contact between pupils and staff as far as possible, people will only be **allowed to mix in designated timetabled groups**.

All groups of pupil will be subject to specialist face-to-face guidance by option choice subjects. **All staff will be required to uphold 2m social distancing at all times**. Pupils will be expected to avoid contact with staff and other pupils by touch, although a full return of pupils means that social distancing between pupils, in their immediate classroom environment, is impossible.

Welsh Government guidance from September states that schools should minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible. The latest published evidence in relation to the transmissibility in children states that children under the age of 18 make up 22 to 25 per cent of the population, but consistently make up <2% of the total COVID-19 caseload in every country. **Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of COVID-19. This is important in all contexts, and schools must consider how to implement this.** Schools and settings must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing.

Minimising contacts

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of COVID-19. Schools must consider how to best implement this and do everything possible within their own context **to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum**. It is acknowledged, however, that schools will have constraints relating to buildings and staffing resources and an element of flexibility may be needed in order to ensure that children are accommodated on their return to school.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between learners and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate and through maintaining distance between individuals. Both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on the:

- learners' ability to distance;
- layout of the school;
- feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum (especially at secondary level).

How Pupils will be grouped

The normal operation of our secondary school setting with all pupils will bring challenges with regards to the **grouping and distancing of pupils**. Therefore, in line with WG advice and guidance in relation to the decrease in the prevalence of COVID-19, and the plan for the autumn term for the resumption of the full range of curriculum subjects, we will increase the size of the groups as required, but stay within the other system of controls.

The guidance **recognises that in the secondary setting, the contact groups are likely to need to be the size (equivalence) of a year group to enable schools to deliver the full range of curriculum subjects and for learners to receive specialist teaching. Average year groups at CCS are 240.**

However, the timetable for each year is divided into X and Y; therefore, the maximum number of contact groups will not ordinarily exceed 120 in Y7 and Y8.

Regardless of the **'group contact size' of a maximum of 120 pupils, groups must be kept apart from other groups where possible and older learners should be encouraged to keep their distance within groups.**

We will therefore aim to take steps to **limit interaction, and social spaces between groups as much as possible**. When using larger groups, the other measures from the system of controls become even more important, **to minimise transmission risks and to minimise the numbers of learners and staff who may need to self-isolate.**

Making efforts to keep these groups at least partially separate and minimising contacts between learners will still offer public health benefits as it reduces the network of possible direct transmission. All teachers and staff **can** operate across different classes and year groups in order to facilitate the delivery of the school timetable.

Where staff need to move between classes and year groups, they should try and keep their distance from learners and other staff as much as they can, and keep a distance of 2 metres from other adults. It is strong public health advice that **staff in secondary schools maintain distance from their learners, staying at the front of the class, and away from their colleagues where possible**. Ideally, adults should maintain a 2-metre distance from each other, and from learners.

In particular, they should avoid any close face-to-face contact and minimise time spent within 1 metre of anyone.

When working with learners who have complex needs or who need close contact care, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff and their peers where possible.

Schools are required to make small adaptations to the classroom to support distancing where possible. This should include seating **learners' side by side and facing forwards, rather than face to face or side on, and might include moving unnecessary furniture out of classrooms to make more space.**

Measures elsewhere

Contact groups should be kept apart where possible, meaning that schools **should avoid large gatherings such as assemblies or collective worship with more than one group.**

When timetabling, groups **should be kept apart and movement around the school site kept to a minimum. This means that staff supervision and presence in all areas is of high priority and all staff, including support staff, are required to maintain high presence and vigilance around the school, particularly in between lessons and to supervise pupils from 'A' to 'B'.** Subjects teams will be required to co-ordinate release from classrooms in a synchronised way to avoid busy corridors. This is why travel time has been built into the school day - to facilitate orderly and staggered classroom release times. WG states that, while passing briefly in the corridor or yard is low risk, **schools should avoid creating busy corridors, entrances and exits.**

We will also re-organise the school day to implement staggered break times and lunch times and time for cleaning surfaces in the dining hall between groups. (Details available separately.)

Shared staff spaces should only be used when staff are able to distance from each other. The Welsh Government states that the use of staff rooms should be minimised, although staff must still have a break of a reasonable length during the day.

Measures for arriving at and leaving school

Where possible, schools should consider staggered starts or adjusting start and finish times to keep groups apart as they arrive and leave school.

Therefore, we will expect pupils to arrive at school from 8:00am – 8:50am, for an 8:50am prompt start to formal lessons. The canteen will be open for pupils from 8am. This will ensure that the full 5 hours of teaching time at CCS will be available, in line with the operational guidance from WG

Visitors

Only visitors authorised by SLT will be allowed on site. All other methods must be exhausted to prevent visitors accessing the site until at least October half term. There will be no parents' evenings held on-site for the first term.

Staffing Arrangements

In considering the staffing resource available at CCS, we will follow and uphold the areas identified in the staff risk assessment

After-school provision – Clubs and Other Activities/ Events

On the basis of the reopening risk assessment, and further consideration of WG operational guidance from September, it is determined that **no pre or after-school clubs or activities will take place until further notice and until, at least, after October 2020, half term.** This is to ensure that stringent cleaning can be conducted from 3pm – 6pm and to monitor the safety and confidence of pupils and staff.

Other provisions will only be restarted when a risk assessment determines it would be safe to do so. Any changes to the above will be clearly communicated to staff, pupils and parents.

We will review the risk assessment on a regular basis and any changes will be clearly communicated to staff, pupils and parents.

Educational visits

There will be no visits abroad authorised for the academic year 2020/21. No planning for educational visits will be permitted for the academic year 2021/22 until further notice and until, at least, January 2021. No educational visits will be authorised to take place during the autumn term of 2020 and no planning for any visit within the UK will be permitted until, at least, January 2021. The school is currently £9k adrift re. deposits which have been paid and not reimbursed, and any future trips will only be permitted where the company takes responsibility for guaranteeing a full refund in the event of the trip being cancelled.

Safety Measures

The following safety measures will continue to be implemented when the school reopens in September:

- increased cleaning of classroom surfaces, including desks, handles, handrails, etc., will be carried out;
- pupils and staff will be encouraged to frequently wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Handwashing should be prioritised over the use of hand sanitisers and hand sanitisers should not replace hand washing. Hand sanitisers with at least 60 percent alcohol will be installed at all entrances to the school blocks and reception, as an additional precaution and for when handwashing is not practicable.

Expectations of Pupils:

- Breaktimes, lunchtimes and the movement of pupils around the school will be staggered, as appropriate, to avoid large groups of pupils gathering. We will aim to provide a 30-minute lunch break, staggered to ensure small groups of pupils and staff. All pupils will be required to sit in the same zone of the dining hall, daily.
- The school yard will be open so pupils are able to go outside during their break times and lunchtimes; however, they will be required to remain in zoned areas (year group zones and this will be no more than 80 pupils at any given time) and not socialise outside of their teaching groups, as far practicably possible.
- The changing rooms remain out of bounds until further notice. These arrangements will be reviewed regularly.
- Pupils will not mix with others who are not in their class or group(s) of learning, wherever practically possible, on the school site in any formal or informal capacity.
- Assemblies will not be held in large groups; however, class teachers may hold assemblies with the pupils in their designated class.
- The hall seating will not be available for use to pupils until further notice as it is of soft material and not easily cleaned via steam daily.
- Form tutor time will not take place as this will add to the number of teachers/pupils who come into contact with each other; this time will be utilised to accommodate a staggered start.
- All teachers will be expected to check pupils' wellbeing levels throughout the day. Teachers allocated to pupils will be a teacher who normally teaches those pupils to ensure relationships are maintained.
- Demonstrations rather than experiments, where possible, will be conducted and this must involve pupils staying in their designated seats within the classroom. Pupils must not be allowed out of their seats to 'wander' around the classroom. All pupils must avoid touch with others.

These measures will be reviewed **weekly** by the **headteacher assisted by the Senior Leadership Team**, in conjunction with teachers, and changed in line with any government guidance and updates over time.

Staff will adhere to the guidelines outlined below:

- Do not come to work if you have coronavirus symptoms, or go home as soon as these develop (informing your line manager), and access a test as soon as possible.
- Clean your hands more often than usual with running water and soap, and dry them thoroughly or use alcohol hand rub or sanitiser, ensuring that all parts of the hands are covered.
- Use the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach.
- Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and household disinfectant.
- Think about ways to modify your teaching approach to keep a distance from pupils in your class as much as possible, particularly close face-to-face support. Always follow the 2m distancing requirement.
- Avoid calling pupils to the front of the class or going to their desk to check on their work if not necessary.
- Help your class to follow the rules on hand cleaning - not touching their faces, 'catch it, bin it, kill it', etc. This includes drawing attention to classroom/ corridor displays with posters.
- Prevent your class from sharing any equipment and resources, e.g. stationery, pens, etc.
- When marking, you may wish to wait 24 hours to mark books handed in; however, there is no evidence of COVID-19 being easily transmitted via paper and cardboard and the WHO states that it does not live any longer than 24 hours on such surfaces.
- Keep your classroom door and windows open, if possible, for airflow and only close these if the temperature falls below the minimum comfortable levels. (18C)
- Limit the number of pupils from your class using the toilet at any one time and remind them of hygiene procedures. No more than 1 pupil must leave the classroom at any given time.
- Limit your contact with other staff members, and do not congregate in shared spaces, especially if the rooms are small. Observe the rotas, duties and limitations shared with you and avoid social interaction with people outside of these designated groupings to enable the school to contain the spread, but also identify a track and trace system within the school environment, as far as practically possible.
- Make sure you have read the school's updated **Behavioural Policy** and know what role in it you are being asked to take.

If a staff member is unable to follow these principles, they should speak to their line manager as a matter of priority.

Infection control

The school's **Infection Control Procedures** will be implemented as appropriate. This follows the Public Health Wales guidance.

http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/All%20Wales%20Infection%20Prevention%20and%20Control%20Guidance%20for%20Educational%20Settings_FINALMay%202017x.pdf

To ensure the risk of transmission of infection is substantially reduced, we will continue to operate the following:

- minimising contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus symptoms, or who live with someone who does, do not attend school;

- cleaning hands more often than usual, ensuring everyone washes their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds using soap or an alcohol-based sanitiser;
- ensuring good respiratory hygiene and displaying posters to promote the steps that should be taken;
- cleaning frequently touched surfaces and equipment often, using standard cleaning products;
- minimising contact and mixing by altering the school environment, including classroom layouts; limiting the number of pupils who use toilet facilities at any time; staggering timetables; and, altering the way pupils move around school;
- ensuring parents do not enter the school, unless it is absolutely necessary, or gather anywhere on the school site or immediately outside of the school;
- minimising staff groups and, where possible, 'isolating' individuals or staff groups. An example of this is the administration staff located in the reception area. They will become a distinct team who will not need to 'travel' outside of their designated area and no member of staff or pupil will be able to access the area physically, unless first aid is required. Access to first aid is restricted to the First Aid Room and the main office and surrounding areas are out of bounds to wider groups of staff.
- The SLT and Site Technicians will have unlimited access across the site to perform their functions. Other staff will be required to minimise travel and avoid accessing areas unless they need to perform their role. These staff, with unrestricted access, will observe at least the 2m distancing requirement so as to secure the trace, test, protect WG Guidance, as defined as a 'contact' in line with the definition and status, as per below links to the latest advice and guidance.

Daily Cleaning

We have developed an enhanced cleaning schedule that will be implemented and sustained until further notice. Cleaners will regularly clean all touch areas and will sustain the cleaning plan prior to the closure of the school in the summer term and as per cleaning RA by Glen Cleaning.

The World Health Organisation and transmission via surfaces, states:

The most important thing to know about coronavirus on surfaces is that they can easily be cleaned with common household disinfectants that will kill the virus. Studies have shown that the COVID-19 virus can survive for up to 72 hours on plastic and stainless steel, less than 4 hours on copper and less than 24 hours on cardboard.

As always, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose.

Therefore, in the school environment, it is considered low risk when marking pupils' worksheets or books and, where staff feel at all anxious about this, books, files, etc. can be handled safely after 24 hours; therefore, the physical marking of books, etc. can and should take place.

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

Transport

Pupils and staff are encouraged to walk or cycle to school or be dropped off by a member of their household. Where this is not possible, and pupils and staff need to use transport, they are required to follow guidelines set out by the local authority as the contractors. Parents who arrange private hire transport are outside of the scope of the school and the LA and we cannot control any aspect of the arrangements made by parents for their children.

Food provision

We will ensure measures are in place so that meals can be prepared and served safely before our kitchen is reopened fully in September and in line with WG advice and guidance.

Biometrics will be discontinued temporarily and until further notice; we will use other methods of obtaining payment.

Curriculum

The curriculum will be taught across the school in line with the normal allocated timetable, and specifications for examinations years (9,10,11,12,13) and, for Y7 and Y8, the national curriculum will apply. Practical areas will avoid any practical activities which involve sharing of equipment and resources and which require pupils to be out of their seats.

We will risk assess and provide guidance to all practical areas separately and make pragmatic decisions accordingly.

Uniform

Pupils are required to wear normal school uniform from September. All pupils must adhere to the uniform policy which is on the school's website and parents must ensure that children are appropriately dressed to avoid conflict in an already difficult time.

Staff dress code

The dress code for staff is resumed in September and is in accordance with the normal areas of the code.

Safeguarding

Normal term-time safeguarding arrangements will apply. Safeguarding training will be refreshed for all staff as per the normal calendar in September and will be online via *Smartlog*.

Identifying and supporting newly vulnerable pupils

We will take steps to identify and support these pupils as they return to school, accounting for the fact that these pupils may not be those who would usually be considered 'at risk'.

Attendance

All pupils are expected to attend school in line with the WG guidance, 13th July 2020. See below link for full details.

No one with coronavirus symptoms should attend the school for any reason.

Parents are required to notify the school, following the normal procedure, if their child is unable to attend. The school will continue to inform social workers where children with a social worker do not attend school.

The school will resume taking its attendance register in accordance with guidance provided by WG.

Re-establishing expectations (beyond September)

The expectations of pupils in areas such as their behaviour and how they act around school will be different, e.g. pupils will be expected to adhere to some form of distancing rules, avoiding any unnecessary touch and maintaining their presence within designated groups

Restarting learning in September

The School Improvement Plan will address the areas for priority and recovery. All aspects will form part of the staff planning day on 1st September 2020.

Teachers' workload and wellbeing

The headteacher is aware that staff wellbeing is of the utmost importance. To support teachers as they settle into a new working routine, a good and reasonable work-life balance is promoted and encouraged.

Upon staff members' return to school in September, we (SLT/HR) will review any changes in circumstances over the summer to identify any reasonable adjustments, etc. and to establish how staff feel in terms of being ready to return to work; any concerns they have about returning; and, any support they require from the school.

We will promote a culture of communication and openness with all staff. Support systems will be made clear to all staff to ensure they understand where they can go to if they require additional support.

Upon return to full opening, daily/weekly staff briefings will be held in **small teams**, normally in departmental or achievement teams, while adhering to social distancing measures. These briefings will be used to check in with each other; build the capacity of the team; share what is working; and, discuss what practices may need adapting.

The Headteacher, SLT, and governing body and other relevant stakeholders will review all of the amended policies to assess whether any further changes need to be made.

All staff will be required to familiarise themselves with the updated policies and procedures as and when they are available.

Communication

Our plans to reopen, and all associated procedures, will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders, including pupils, parents, staff, visitors, suppliers and contractors.

These arrangements will be communicated via *Parentmail*. Parents will be expected to share the above information with their children.

Staff will be informed of all relevant plans, including safety measures; timetable changes; and, staggered arrival and departure times, and will have opportunities to discuss training on the new measures.

Staff will be engaged regularly to get their feedback on the arrangements that are in place.

Monitoring and review

The SLT will continue to review all solutions used during the partial school closure and the summer 3-week partial return and consider how these solutions might be part of sustainable future operation.

This plan will be reviewed continually in line with guidance from the government and PHW in collaboration with any advice and guidance from the LA and professional trade associations.

Any changes to the plan will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Links to WG Guidance are as follows:

<https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>

<https://gov.wales/guidance-learning-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19>

Prior to September

<https://gov.wales/keep-education-safe-operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-covid-19>