

17th July 2020

Dear Families,

I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to everyone for their support over recent months. The coronavirus pandemic has been a great challenge for all of us - however, I have been inspired by the dedication of everyone in our school community to support one another during this challenging time.

I am proud that we have provided spaces for all pupils to attend school three times as part of the 'Check in, Catch up, Prepare' phase as well as running our Hub provision. This, as well as our phone calls to those unable to attend, has meant that the vast majority of our pupils are able to access lessons on-line ready for the start of September 2020 and in the event of a further school closure.

You will be aware that the Education Minister, Kirsty Williams, has announced that, as of September 1st 2020, schools are able to re-open to all in accordance with government guidelines. Between September 1st to September 14th 2020, schools have been directed to open on a phased basis. It is our intention to use this period to;

- provide staff training (both teaching and learning updates and safety advice)
- to provide transition for our new Year 7 cohort
- to phase in our other pupils so that they can familiarise themselves with new school safety rules and procedures.

Date	Expected in School
Tuesday 1 st September	INSET DAY – Staff training
Wednesday 2 nd September	INSET DAY – Staff training
Thursday 3 rd September	9.30 am – 10.30 am – 7 Group 1 10.45 am – 11.45 pm – 7 Group 2 12.00 pm – 1.00 pm – 7 Group 3 1.15 pm – 2.15 pm – 7 Group 4
Friday 4 th September	9.30 am – 10.30 am – 7 Group 5 10.45 am – 11.45 pm – 7 Group 6 12.00 pm – 1.00 pm – 7 Group 7
Monday 7 th September	Y7 and Y11*
Tuesday 8 th September	Y7, Y10 and Y11
Wednesday 9 th September	Y7, Y9, Y10 and Y11
Thursday 10 th September	Y7, Y8, Y9, Y10 and Y11
Friday 11 th September	Y7, Y8, Y9, Y10 and Y11

Details of Year 7 groupings will be communicated to parents individually in due course.

*Between September 7th and 9th, pupils at home will also receive lessons. This will be through 'Teams' in the same way as they have experienced over the last three weeks.

The school expects that all students will return to school, by September 10th 2020, providing community transmission rates continue to fall and remain low.

Our approach is, and will always be, underpinned by the latest understanding of the science available to Welsh Government, which indicates the need for a phased approach to limit the risk of increasing the rate of transmission. The increased operation of the school is based on a stabilisation of this R value. Therefore, should this worsen then the school will adapt accordingly, in line with local authority and Welsh Government advice.

There are a number of key considerations that have led to the decision to increase operations within school settings at this time. These include the severity of disease in children – there is high scientific confidence that children of all ages have less severe symptoms than adults if they contract coronavirus (COVID-19). However, please be assured that we will continue to act with caution in order to safeguard all members of the community, while increasing operations, in line with national guidance.

Below is an outline of how the school will operate in the autumn term (and potentially beyond) and we hope it will answer any questions you may have. If you have any further questions, please e-mail contact@willows.cardiff.sch.uk. Naturally, we will continue to review the situation throughout the autumn term and, significantly, our planning assumes that the community transmission rates continue to fall/stabilise.

Thank you for your support. I wish you and your family a restful holiday and we are very much looking forward to continuing to work alongside you in September.

Kind regards,

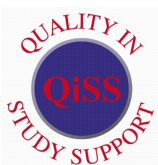


Chris Norman

Headteacher

Willows High School

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Willows High School – Operational Guidance:

Entrance and Exits:

As far as is reasonably practicable, the school would expect students to socially distance when entering or exiting the school site. Parents/carers will not be permitted to drive on to the school premises to drop off and/or collect students. Pupils that travel by bus will be dropped off at the Mercia Road bus stop and are expected to make their way to their designated entrance point. The bus will also pick pupils up from this point at the end of the day. In line with the latest guidance, the use of a face-covering will be required when using any form of public transport. This includes school transport.

While there will be limited expectation that students will need to social distance within their own year groups, there will be an expectation that they socially distance from all adults and other students in different ‘bubbles’ until a time when this is deemed unnecessary. At the time of writing, this remains at 2m.

-Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 – Entrance and Exit through main gates on Mercia Road

-Year 10 and Year 11 – Entrance and Exit through smaller gate on Meirion Place

Please see the attached map for further clarification.

In order to ensure pupil safety, Breakfast Club will start at **9.00 am**. Pupils will be able to collect a ‘take-away’ snack but will need to eat this at their designated line up point. Pupils that arrive at the designated gates **after 9.30 am are late** to school. Late pupils should still make their way to their designated gates until 10 am. They will be let in but will receive a late mark and a detention. Pupils with medical appointments only have permission to arrive late at the front entrance.

On arrival in the school yard, pupils will be filtered to a designated area by senior members of staff. The areas are as follows:

-Year 7 – School Theatre

-Year 8 – Canteen – right side

-Year 9 – Canteen – left side

-Year 10 – School Gym

-Year 11 – Straight to Form Class

As usual, form tutors will arrive to lead pupils to their classrooms. It is important that pupils walk on the left, in single file, at all times inside the school building.

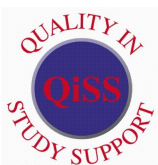
There will be a co-ordinated exit of the building. Pupils will be called for by class and accompanied to the relevant gates by their teacher. Again, it is important that pupils walk on the left, in single file, at all times.

Breaks and Lunchtimes:

In line with Welsh Government Guidance, the school will be introducing staggered breaks and lunch times for the foreseeable future (see diagram below).

Please note, that **until September 14th, pupils will be required to bring a packed lunch** (including those who are eligible for Free School Meals). After this time, catering facilities will resume. However, while the school continues to operate staggered lunch times, for reasons linked to food standards, it may not be possible to serve hot meals throughout the day. Therefore, while these restrictions are in place, cold food will continue to be provided during this phase of increased operations. Likewise, catering will not be offered during break time.

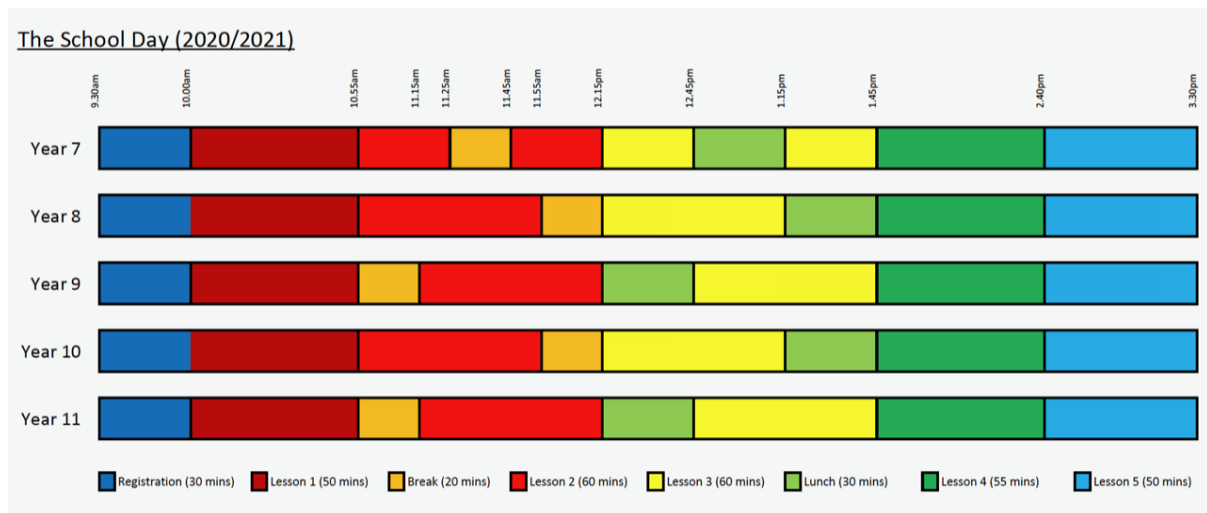
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Parents/Carers of students who currently receive a free school meal have been receiving money debited directly into their specified bank accounts. While the local authority continues to do this, the school will not be issuing meals to these students without charge. However, as soon as this scheme ceases, the issuing of free school meals will resume as normal.



It would be very useful from September if every parent could make sure that they have an up to date ParentPay account. It is anticipated that food ordering will take place via this in the near future – further details to follow.

Lesson Time:

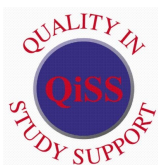
Pupils will attend their time-tabled lessons as usual and will be required to follow the guidance given to them on their first day regarding moving around the school building. There will be subject specific guidance which pertains to the use of equipment in practical subjects. Again, it is important that all pupils respect the rules at all times to ensure the safety of the school community.

Behaviour:

The school will work closely with staff, students and parents/carers to ensure that behaviour expectations are clearly understood and consistently supported, taking account of individual needs and will also consider how to build new expectations into our rewards system. The school’s Behaviour policy has been updated to include expectations linked directly to coronavirus. In relation to coronavirus, the school accepts and expects that students (and staff!) will make the occasional mistake in relation to social distancing etc. However, where there is a deliberate breaking of a school rule, especially around measures to keep students and staff safe, then sanctions will be in place.

Over the last three weeks, our students demonstrated a calm, measured and respectful approach to learning. This is one of the main reasons why it was such a successful period. However, as you will know, in order to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students and staff, everyone at school needs to behave responsibly. We will continue to expect everyone to show mutual respect and empathy to each other in order to keep everyone safe. Where a student deliberately fails to follow social distancing and personal protective procedures, the health and safety of themselves, fellow students and staff will be compromised. The school has re-written its Behaviour policy to reinforce our expectations. We ask that parents/carers carefully explain the rationale to their children so that this doesn’t become a concern. However, we cannot risk the safety of pupils and/or staff.

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Frequently Asked Questions:

Should my child attend?

From September, the vast majority of pupils will be expected to return to school. However, it is worth noting that;

- a small number of pupils and members of staff may still be unable to attend, in line with Public Health Wales advice, as they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
- the latest advice for those individuals who received a shielding letter from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales comes to an end on 16th August. Subject to a continued decline in the rates of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19), they may return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding. Further guidance from Welsh Government will be provided in the coming weeks.
- where there is a rise of the virus in local areas, affected children from that area only, may be required to shield during the period where rates of transmission remain high. As a result, they may temporarily be absent from school
- some pupils may no longer be required to shield but remain under the care of a specialist health professional. They should discuss their care needs with their health professional prior to returning to school.

The school is clear that it expects all other pupils to attend school as normal. Pupils of compulsory school age should attend unless a statutory reason applies. For example, the student is unable to attend because of sickness, is absent for a necessary religious observance etc.

What if my child is ill?

Please inform the school immediately if your child is going to be absent from school. If your child has coronavirus symptoms, there is a requirement that they remain at home (for the period as specified by Public Health Wales – please seek the advice of your doctor).

What if my child becomes ill during the day?

First Aid will be offered by the school. Any pupil demonstrating Covid-19 symptoms will be placed in a separate designated room, monitored and parents called in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines. It is vitally important that we have up to date contact numbers and that answering calls from the school is prioritised.

Will my child be required to wear school uniform?

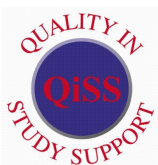
From September, the school will revert to its usual uniform expectations. School uniform helps play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of the school and sets the appropriate tone. Uniforms will not be required to be cleaned any more often than usual, nor do they need to be cleaned using methods which are different from normal. We ask parents to support us fully with this. On days where pupils have P.E. lessons they should attend school wearing their P.E. kit.

Is it ok for my child to wear a face-covering?

Face coverings are not required to be worn, unless on school/public transport. Should the advice from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales and/or Minister for Health and Social Care change, then we will amend this advice accordingly. However, should a child or adult feel comfortable wearing a face-covering then we are happy to support this. **Gloves should not be worn.**

Should my child bring their own equipment?

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Yes. As usual, pupils should bring their pens and equipment with them. They will be responsible for keeping their personal belongings in a suitably sized school bag. There will be an opportunity for staff to mark exercise books etc. However, in the first instance there will be greater emphasis on verbal feedback and self - assessment to lower the risk of transmission.

Can I enter the school site?

At the time of writing, the current guidance suggests the school should limit the number of people all members of the community should come into contact with. Therefore, in line with this guidance, we ask that all meetings, where possible, are hosted 'virtually'. If this is not possible, then you should contact the main office to make an appointment. **However, it will not be possible for families and/or visitors to arrive at the school for an appointment without prior arrangement.**

Will wellbeing remain a priority?

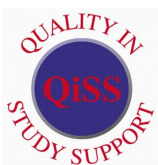
During the coming months, it is recognised that students are more likely to be anxious as operations are increased. Therefore, to help cope with these additional pressures, a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing will continue to form a significant part of the curriculum to provide the necessary support and guidance. Staff will be alert to identify and support students who exhibit signs of distress. Pastoral care and bereavement support through a range of internal plans are in place. For students requiring more intensive and/or specialist support, the school will coordinate this via external services.

What safety measures will be in place in school?

The following safety measures will be introduced / continue:

- thorough risk assessments in accordance with Welsh Government policy.
- the introduction of designated entrances, line ups and exits to maximise distance measures as is reasonably practicable in and around our school building
- the introduction of staggered breaks and lunches to reduce contact between different groups of people
- enhanced cleaning arrangements - particular attention will be given to clean 'high-touch' areas and surfaces, which will be cleaned more frequently than normal, including bathrooms, railings, tables, equipment and door handles. Canteen facilities will be cleaned in between sittings. The Operations Manager will ensure that the cleaning team fully understand the requirements and ensure that they have appropriate training, products and equipment available in a timely manner.
- enhanced opportunities for hand sanitisation and regular reminders for all on effective techniques
- an active engagement with NHS Test, Track and Protect strategy.

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Parent/Carer Check List:

We appreciate there is a lot of information to take in. To make this easier we have written the following checklist for parents:

Requirement	Tick
My child's uniform is ready	
My child's equipment is ready – pens and school bag	
My child's packed lunch is ready - up until September 14th	
I have checked the transport information – (and have a mask ready if by bus)	
I have checked the entrance and exit point	
I know my child must arrive between 9.00 – 9.30 am	
The school has my up-to-date phone numbers and email address	
I have signed up to ClassCharts and ParentPay	
I have spoken to my child about good hygiene habits (including hand washing for 20 seconds, coughing into elbows, using tissues and avoiding touching face)	
I have spoken to my child regarding the need to behave appropriately and follow all guidance from staff – in order for them to remain safe and to ensure the safety of others.	
I understand that if my child deliberately fails to follow personal protective procedures, they may not be permitted to return to school	

Useful Information:

To sign up to ClassCharts: ClassCharts-signup@willows.cardiff.sch.uk

To ask us a question: contact@willows.cardiff.sch.uk

For help with school uniform: natalie.kendrick-doyle@willows.cardiff.sch.uk

For help with food over the holidays: natalie.kendrick-doyle@willows.cardiff.sch.uk

For queries from parents of new Year 7 parents: transition@willows.cardiff.sch.uk

Helpline numbers:

Domestic Abuse Helpline - 0808 80 10 800

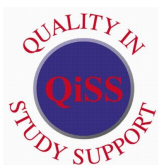
MIND Mental Health Helpline - 0300 123 3393

Wales Drug and Alcohol Helpline - 0808 808 2234

Childline - 0800 1111

Samaritans - 116 123

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