

Willows High School
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BELONG, *believe*, ACHIEVE
PERTHYN, CREDU, LLWYDDO

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Rhodfa Willows
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25th August 2020

Dear Families,

It has been such a long time since our school was fully open and bustling with over 700 pupils, it's good to be planning for us reopening in September. It is going to be an exciting year with lots of new opportunities and I would hope that you and your child are really looking forward to it.

At the start, the return to school will be as normal as possible as it is important that pupils are able to learn and to enjoy their time at school. However, whilst trying to get back to a situation which is as close to normal as possible, there is a need for certain changes to be made in order to ensure that the whole school community is as safe as possible.

This letter aims to describe these changes and what can be done to support our work, we hope you find it useful. Whilst returning completely to the school system that we left in March is not going to be possible at this time, I know that working together we can ensure that the new school year will be an incredibly successful one.

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

If you have any further questions, please e-mail contact@willows.cardiff.sch.uk. Our Parent Handbook, covering more detailed information regarding the school, can be found on our website www.willowshigh.co.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, we are very much looking forward to continuing to work alongside you in September.

Kind regards,

Chris Norman
Headteacher Willows
High School

Willows High School – Information for returning in September:

Uniform:

Our mindset is:

Smart on the outside, smart on the inside.

The wearing of school uniform is compulsory at Willows and strictly enforced. School uniform promotes a positive attitude and sense of belonging to the school and a suitable image in the eyes of the wider community. We have seen the difference the smart uniform has made on the confidence and self-esteem of pupils.

Willows Uniform:

Grey traditional trousers (not tight fitting, no jeans, no leggings) or skirt (no shorter than 5cm above the knee), school blazer, white shirt and school tie (**A free school tie will be provided to pupils on their first day back to school**). Grey tailored shorts may be worn in the summer term. School jumpers (whilst in stock) are optional. All uniform can be bought from YC Sports, Crwys Road.

Hijabs:

These should be plain black or blue and enable the school tie to be seen at all times.

All efforts will be made to ensure that families have access to the correct uniform. However, pupils who persistently contravene the uniform code will not be permitted to attend their lessons until the correct uniform is worn.

P.E. Kit:

School P.E. top, plain black sport shorts or plain black tracksuit trousers.

No leggings, jeggings, tight fitting trousers, jeans, jean like trousers or low rise trousers.

No hoodies

Hair:

No extreme styles / non-natural colours.

Shoes:

Black leather or faux leather shoes or ankle boots only.

No canvas, no trainers, no logos.

Black to go with the uniform.

Leather to be weather resistant.

On days where pupils have P.E. lessons they should attend school wearing their P.E. kit.

The Willows Way

Smart on the outside, smart on the inside



What do we mean by “black leather shoes?”



Examples of **acceptable**
black leather shoes



Examples of **unacceptable**
black leather shoes



Dates pupils should attend school:

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)
- provide transition for our new Year 7 cohort
- phase in our other pupils so that they can familiarise themselves with new school safety rules and procedures.

Pupils will attend school following the information shown in the table below:

Date	Expected in School
Tuesday 1 st September	Preparation Day – Staff training
Wednesday 2 nd September	Preparation Day – Staff training
Thursday 3 rd September	9.30 am – 10.30 am – 7McArthur 10.45 am – 11.45 pm – 7Farah 12.00 pm – 1.00 pm – 7Radcliffe 1.15 pm – 2.15 pm – 7Markova
Friday 4 th September	9.30 am – 10.30 am – 7Grey-Thompson 10.45 am – 11.45 pm – 7Boston 12.00 pm – 1.00 pm – 7Edwards
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

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 socially 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 diagram on the next page 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.

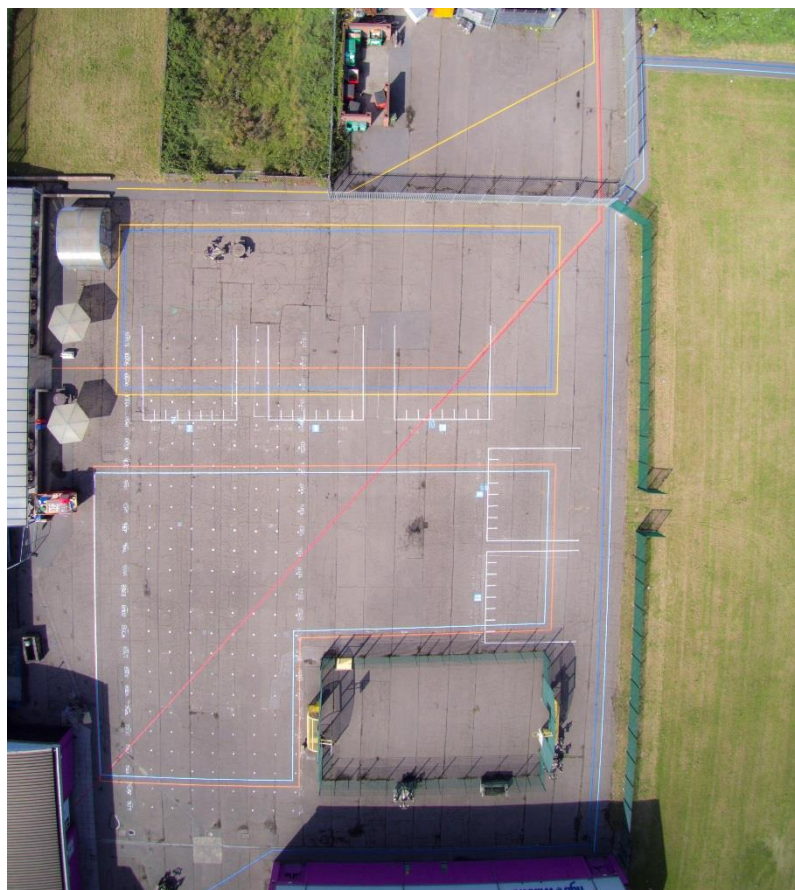
On arrival in the school yard, pupils will be filtered to a designated area by senior members of staff. The areas are as follows:

- Year 7 – School Theatre
- Year 8 – Canteen – right side
- Year 9 – Canteen – left side
- Year 10 – School Gym
- Year 11 – Straight to Form Class

The diagram opposite shows the layout of the yard. At the start of the day:

- Year 7 should follow the Red line
- Year 8 should follow the Yellow line
- Year 9 should follow the Orange line
- Year 10 should follow the Light Blue line
- Year 11 should follow the Dark Blue line

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.



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).

Morning Tutor Time <i>Pupils follow a programme of reading that covers current issues as well as text to develop pupils' social, cultural and emotional development</i> 9.30 - 10.00		
Lesson 1 10.00 - 10.55		
Yr 7 Lesson 2 10.55 - 11.25	Yrs 8/10 Lesson 2 10.55 - 11.55	Yrs 9/11 Break 10.55 - 11.15
Yr 7 Break 11.25 - 11.45		
Yr 7 Lesson 2 11.45 - 12.15	Yrs 8/10 Break 11.55 - 12.15	Yrs 9/11 Lesson 2 11.15 - 12.15
Yr 7 Lesson 3 12.15 - 12.45	Yrs 8/10 Lesson 3 12.15 - 1.15	Yrs 9/11 Lunch 12.15 - 12.45
Yr 7 Lunch 12.45 - 1.15		
Yr 7 Lesson 3 1.15 - 1.45	Yrs 8/10 Lunch 1.15 - 1.45	Yrs 9/11 Lesson 3 12.45 - 1.45
Lesson 4 1.45 - 2.40		
Lesson 5 2.40 - 3.30		

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.

Parents/Carers of students who currently receive a free school meal have been receiving money credited directly into their specified bank accounts. The local authority will continue to do this up to Monday 14th August, therefore we 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.

During Breaktime and Lunchtime, Year Groups will be allocated a side of the Canteen and an area of the yard to use (please see coloured areas on previous yard diagram)

- **Year 7 will have use of the whole yard as they are having break and lunch separately**
- **Year 8 will use the area with the Yellow boundary**
- **Year 9 will use the area with the Orange boundary**
- **Year 10 will use the area with the Light Blue boundary**
- **Year 11 will use the area with the Dark Blue boundary**

This will ensure that Year Group Bubbles do not come into contact with each other during these times.

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.

In the last three weeks of the Summer Term, 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.

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 advice for those individuals who received a shielding letter from the Chief Medical Officer for Wales came 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. Uniform 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?

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.

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 sign up to ParentPay: Karen.goodfellow@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 queries from Parents of new Year 7 Pupils: 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