



# St. Joseph's RC High School

## Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig Joseff Sant

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**Headteacher/Pennaeth:** Mrs J Jarrett BA(Hons) M.A NPQH

25th August 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Re: Arrangements for September opening**

As we approach the start of the new academic year, I am writing to provide you with an update on how school will operate during the autumn term and potentially beyond.

However, before I go into the exact details, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for all of your support over the past five months. It has certainly been a challenging time for you as families, and for us trying to deliver an effective education in an unfamiliar way with very little notice. Nonetheless, it does show how, by working together, we can overcome issues and obstacles and emerge all the stronger for it.

I have based our return to school procedures and risk assessment on the Welsh Government guidelines. Please click [here](#) to access them. Naturally, we will continue to review our procedures as Welsh Government assessments are made.

I apologise that this letter is detailed but it is vital that we reopen the school in a safe and controlled manner, so please do take the time to read through this letter with your child.

In this letter I have outlined:

1. Timetable for phased return to school
2. Essential Welsh Government protective measures
3. Implementing protective measures:
  - Personal hygiene
  - Cleaning the site
  - Pupil groupings
  - Designated zones for each year group ('contact group')
  - Arrival at school
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  - Catering
  - Measures beyond the classroom
  - Social distancing
  - Transport
  - School uniform
  - Behaviour
  - Contingency planning

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## Timetable for phased return to school

<b>Tuesday 1 September (week 1)</b>	Teacher preparation day to ensure there is a secure understanding of our safety measures.
<b>Wednesday 2 September</b>	Welcome and induction for new Year 7 pupils.
<b>Thursday 3 September</b>	Day 2 for Year 7 pupils. Induction day for Year 11 and Year 13. (Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 12 at home).
<b>Friday 4 September</b>	Induction day for Year 8, Year 9, Year 10 and Year 12. (Year 7, Year 11, Year 13 at home).
<b>Wk beg 7 September (week 2)</b>	All pupils in school.

### Essential Welsh Government protective measures

Taking into account the latest Welsh Government and UK Government guidance, the school has adapted its system of protective measures which our pupils, staff and families will be familiar with from the summer term. These essential measures include:

- a requirement that people **who are unwell with symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) stay at home**: new continuous cough; high temperature; loss of or change to your normal sense of smell or taste (anosmia). Click [here](#) for very important self-isolation guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus infection. **Please remain at home, self-isolate, arrange a COVID-19 test and notify the school if you or a member of your household have symptoms of COVID-19, or you or someone you live with has tested positive for COVID-19.**
- active engagement with [Test, Trace, Protect](#) strategy
- robust hand and respiratory hygiene including ventilation
- enhanced cleaning arrangements
- formal consideration of how to reduce contacts and maximise social and physical distancing between those in school wherever possible and minimise potential for contamination so far as is reasonably practicable.

### Implementing protective measures

In line with Welsh Government guidance, the school has already assessed the risks and taken reasonable steps to protect staff, pupils and others from COVID-19. The school implemented proportionate control measures to limit the transmission of the virus as part of the first phase of increased operations from 29th June. As part of the planning for a full return by 7th September, the school has considered the additional risks so that sensible measures are put in place to control those risks for the additional children and staff who will attend in the autumn term.

### Personal hygiene

Strong personal hygiene helps reduce the risk of COVID-19. Therefore, the school will ensure that all staff and pupils are made aware of the importance of regularly washing their hands. Specifically, that hands should be washed with liquid soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Staff will also ensure pupils are reminded of effective handwashing techniques, as highlighted by the National Health Service guidance. This guidance can be accessed [here](#).

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For clarity, this advice will be displayed around the school on posters. The school will ensure that pupils and staff have an opportunity to clean their hands regularly. Fixed hand sanitisers, with at least 60% alcohol, have been installed in every classroom, at all entrances and exits and throughout other communal areas of the school. Regular hand washing should be undertaken:

- on arrival at school and when leaving school
- before and after handling food
- after using the toilet
- before and after handling objects and equipment that may have been used by others
- where there has been any physical contact
- after people blow their nose, sneeze or cough.

The NHS 'catch it, bin it, kill it' principles will remain a strong feature of the school's approach to supporting good respiratory hygiene. Pupils should also cough into their elbow. In so far as it is possible, pupils should be encouraged not to touch their face. While the school will reinforce good personal hygiene habits, the support of families at home to instil the importance of these practices is crucial to reducing risk of transmission.

### **Cleaning the site**

The 'cleaning of non-healthcare settings' guidance is understood by the relevant school staff and will be followed at all times. The guidance can be accessed [here](#). We have ensured that extra cleaning staff are available all day in all the designated zones. The building will be cleaned regularly and at least once a day. Hard surfaces will be cleaned with warm soapy water and then disinfected with the cleaning products normally used. Particular attention will be given to the cleaning of 'high-touch' areas and surfaces, which will be cleaned more frequently than normal, including toilets, railings, tables, equipment and door handles.

Additional cleaning will take place when pupil groups are changed within any area or classroom. This will include the canteen and main hall which will be used during our staggered break and lunch times. Cleaning staff are expected to maintain social distancing from each other and from teaching staff and pupils at all times. The school will continue to dispose of waste in line with latest guidance and ensure it is removed daily. This includes the procedure for disposing of any waste suspected of being in contact with someone showing symptoms of COVID-19. Our Business Manager will ensure that the cleaning team fully understands the cleaning requirements and ensure that they have appropriate training, products and equipment available in a timely manner.

### **Pupil groupings**

To avoid the risk of transmission from room to room and to keep the number of people each person comes into contact with to a minimum, the school has been organised into designated zones and 'contact groups'. This is the approach which was used by the school during the first phase of increased operations in the summer term. **The 'contact group' will be defined as a pupil's year group.** These distinct 'contact groups' do not mix with other groups, making it quicker and easier in the event of a positive case to identify those who may need to self-isolate. Pupils will remain in their zones and 'contact group' whilst teaching and support staff move.

Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 will be taught in a designated zone largely in their form groups and usually in their form room. The exceptions to this are subjects where they will need to move to a specialist room, e.g. Music, Design and Technology, PE, Games, Art and IT.

Pupils in years 10, 11, 12 and 13 will be taught in a designated zone and will move classrooms within this zone as they need access to their option subject specialisms and their relevant core subject sets.

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### Designated zones for each year group ('contact group')

Year groups will be expected to enter and exit the school building from the identified designated entrance and exit below.

Year group/'Contact group'	Form	Form room	Designated entrance and exit
7	J	G1	Stairwell 1
	O	Chapel	Stairwell 1
	S	G2	Stairwell 1
	E	G16	Stairwell 1
	P	G3	Stairwell 1
	H	G4	Stairwell 1
	T	G5	Stairwell 1
	V	G15	Stairwell 1

\*This week, all year 7 parents and carers will receive a communication from Head of Year 7, Mr James, regarding your child's form room and required gate entry.

Year group/'Contact group'	Form	Form room	Designated entrance and exit
8	J	G21	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side)
	O	G20	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side)
	S	G24	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side)
	E	G19	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side)
	P	O1	Front of school
	H	O2	Front of school
	T	G17	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side). Through quad area to drama corridor
	V	G18	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side) Through quad area to drama corridor

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<b>Year group/'Contact group'</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Form room</b>	<b>Designated entrance and exit</b>
9	J	S5	Stairwell 1
	O	S4	Stairwell 1
	S	Training Room (next to library)	Stairwell 1
	E	Library	Stairwell 1
	P	S8	Stairwell 1
	H	S9	Stairwell 1
	T	S7	Stairwell 1
	V	S6	Stairwell 1

<b>Year group/'Contact group'</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Form room</b>	<b>Designated entrance and exit</b>
10	J	F3	Stairwell 2
	O	F24	Stairwell 2
	S	F2	Stairwell 2
	E	F1	Stairwell 2
	P	F7	Stairwell 2
	H	F6	Stairwell 2
	T	F21	Stairwell 2
	V	F22	Stairwell 2

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Year group/'Contact group'	Form	Form room	Designated entrance and exit
11	J	F8	Stairwell 3
	O	F9	Stairwell 3
	S	F10	Stairwell 3
	E	F20	Stairwell 3
	P	F13	Stairwell 3
	H	F14	Stairwell 3
	T	F16	Stairwell 3
	V	F15	Stairwell 3

Year group/'Contact group'	Form	Form room	Designated entrance and exit
12	A	F28	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side)
	B	F30	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side)
	C	Common Room	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side)
	D	Study Area	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side)
	E	F27	Stairwell 4 (Technology door/ASDA side)

\*The first week of term, all year 12 parents and carers will receive a communication from Head of Sixth Form, Mr Ryan, regarding your child's form room and required gate entry.

Year group	Form	Form room	Designated entrance and exit
13	A	G9	Stairwell 3
	B	G14	Stairwell 3
	C	G12	Stairwell 3
	D	G6	Stairwell 3
	E	G8	Stairwell 3

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## Arrival at school

When pupils arrive at school, they will be expected to immediately enter the school building via their designated entrance. All pupils must use the hand sanitiser at the entrance. All pupils must go to their form rooms and wait for registration. The canteen will not be open before school and the outside area will not be accessible until break or lunchtime. When on site, pupils will not be permitted to leave and return to the site until the end of day. This now includes sixth form pupils who will only be permitted to leave the site for a collaboration lesson or to return home.

The entrance and exit to the school site will be strictly controlled. Only essential visitors, including parents, will be allowed on site. **If you are driving your child to school, please drive into the school car park and use the parking bays at the front of the car park nearest the school building.** These car parking bays are now dedicated to parents, carers and some home to school minibuses.

## Timings of the day

The start of the school day will remain the same as normal. However, the finish time has slightly changed. This is largely owing to the volume of pupils who attend school via local authority provided/public transport. There will also be staggered unstructured times throughout the day for break and lunch.

	Years 7 and 11	Years 8 and 10	Years 9, 12, 13
Registration	08.50-09.00	08.50-09.00	08.50-09.00
Period 1	09.00-10.00	09.00-10.00	09.00-10.00
Period 2 (including BREAK)	10.00-11.20	10.00-11.20	10.00-11.20
<b>BREAK</b>	<b>10.30-10.50</b>	<b>10.00-10.20</b>	<b>11.00-11.20</b>
Period 3	11.20-12.20	11.20-12.20	11.20-12.20
Period 4 (including LUNCH)	12.20-13.50	12.20-13.50	12.20-13.50
<b>LUNCH</b>	<b>12.20-12.50</b>	<b>12.50-13.20</b>	<b>13.20-13.50</b>
Registration	13.50-14.10	13.50-14.10	13.50-14.10
Period 5	14.10-15.20	14.10-15.10	14.10-15.15

## Classroom measures

In line with Welsh Government guidance, class sizes will revert to normality from September. However, through the creation of year group 'contact groups', pupils are far safer coming into contact with fewer pupils, and the school will put in place measures to limit the amount of time they are in face-to-face contact with others.

The school will make necessary adaptations to support implementation of the latest health advice. For example, rooms will be organised to limit pupils facing each other in favour of pupils sitting side-by-side and facing forwards. Wherever possible, unnecessary furniture will be removed to maximise space. In line with the latest medical guidance, teaching staff will be expected to remain at the front

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of the class. This will support them with maintaining social distance (of 2m) from pupils. However, it is recognised that this is not possible for pupils with additional needs.

Equipment and resources are integral to education in schools. For individual and very frequently used equipment, such as pencils and pens, it is recommended that staff and pupils have their own items that are not shared. Classroom based resources, such as books can be used and shared within the contact group. These should be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces. Resources that are shared between classes or contact groups, such as sports, art, technology, IT and science equipment should be cleaned frequently and meticulously and always between contact groups, or rotated to allow them to be left unused and out of reach for a period of 48 hours (72 hours for plastics) between use by different 'contact groups'. In line with Welsh Government guidance, pupils and staff can take books and other shared resources home, although unnecessary sharing should be avoided. This is particularly the case where it does not contribute to the education and development of pupils. The amount of 'take away' marking will be limited. When traditional teacher marking is required, teachers must leave 48 hours before marking the work and not return the work to pupils until 48 hours have passed after marking.

### **Catering**

Due to restrictions on mixing year groups, it will not be possible to open the canteen to serve breakfast before school. However, at break and lunchtime, provision for food to all pupils who want it, including those eligible for free school meals, will be in place. There will be provision for pupils to purchase a hot or cold "grab-and-go" bag. During the staggered break and lunchtimes, the main hall will be used by key stage 3 pupils to buy their food and the canteen by key stage 4 and key stage 5 pupils.

As was shared with families in an email July 9th, one change we will be introducing is that we will **no longer be accepting cash** on site via our revaluation units. With so few now using this method to pay for meals, we felt that the time was right to go cashless (both for operational reasons and to minimise the handling of money) and move towards on-line payments only.

Existing parents and carers will be aware that in 2016 we introduced a new on-line payment and communication system 'Schoolcomms'. This allows for the downloading of a free "School Gateway" app. Our system has been successfully operating for 4 years now with approx. 90% of all payments made on-line. The Schoolgateway smartphone app enables you to pay for school meals online via debit or credit cards. It also enables parents and carers to monitor meal balances, top up the cards 24/7 remotely via their smartphones and view items purchased by their children during the school week.

For parents/carers new to St. Joseph's or if you haven't yet downloaded the app, please note you can do so by following the simple instructions below:

If you have a smartphone, you can download the "School Gateway" app from the app store (Android and iPhone). By doing this, both you and the school avoid incurring charges for text messages, and future message exchanges will be free. It is quick and easy to do. All you need is the email address and mobile phone number that the school holds on record for you. Alternatively, you can visit the website [www.schoolgateway.com](http://www.schoolgateway.com) and click on "new user". You will receive a text message with a PIN number to log into School Gateway. If you experience any trouble when logging in, please contact the school on **(01633) 653112** and we will update your details on SIMS. Details on downloading the app are also available via our school website.

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## Measures beyond the classroom

Year groups or 'contact groups' should remain separate to lower the risk of transmission. Furthermore, movement around the school site will be kept to a minimum. As a result, we have introduced more double lessons (2 hours) into the timetable. Large gatherings, such as collective worship and assemblies will not take place until a time when Welsh Government and the local authority advice suggests otherwise. These activities will continue to be delivered virtually.

As stated above, the school will stagger break and lunch times between the different 'contact groups' to ensure that movement and concentration of people is minimised and prevents overcrowding. This is relevant not only for pupils and staff but for families. The school will also make parents/carers, pupils and staff aware of social distancing expectations during arrival and collection. The entrance and exit to the site will continue to be controlled. Visitors, including parents/carers and governors, will be limited to 'essential only', to reduce contact with different groups of people. This will be reviewed on a regular basis, in line with the latest guidance from Welsh Government and the local authority. The school recognises that some direct or indirect mixing between pupils in different 'contact groups' is unavoidable. For example, when using transport, when receiving specialist subject teaching or owing to staffing restraints. However, the school will endeavour to minimise the risk of transmission by implementing a range of cleaning risk controls. Furthermore, some pupils, for example those with additional learning needs, may require specific help and preparation to introduce these changes to behavioural practice. Relevant staff in school will work with these individuals to support this effectively.

## Social distancing

While there will be limited expectation that pupils will need to social distance within their own 'contact groups', there will be an expectation that they will have to social distance from all adults and other pupils in different 'contact groups' until a time when this is deemed unnecessary. **This remains at 2 metres.** In readiness of increased operations from 29th June, the school took the necessary steps to ensure social distancing arrangements were in place. The school's expectations around social distancing have been developed to help keep pupils, staff, and their families safe and well. Social distancing will play a large part in the medium-to-longer term planning at school. As far as is reasonably practicable, the school would expect pupils to social distance when entering or exiting the school site. Parents/carers can drive on to the school premises to drop off and/or collect their child. However, parents and carers will not be allowed out of their cars and will not be able to enter the premises without a prior arranged appointment. The school will be publishing a 'virtual meeting' guidance document to support interaction with pupils, families, governors and other stakeholders. Meetings with families will only take place on a face-to-face basis, when it is considered safe to do so. This measure is designed to limit the number of people entering the school site to help reduce the risk of transmission.

## Transport

As was outlined in the letter I sent all parents and carers on 21st August, transport is being procured on the same basis as pre-Covid arrangements, so the same services will operate.

Please can I remind all families that whilst there is no requirement for pupils to social distance on public transport, **the wearing of face masks is mandatory and your child will not be permitted on the bus if they are not sensibly wearing one.** On a double decker bus, as far as possible, years 7, 8 and 9 will sit on the ground floor and years 10, 11, 12 and 13 the top floor.

**The requirement to wear a face mask on public transport will also apply to pupils who are transported on the school minibus to their collaboration lessons.**

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### **School uniform**

Welsh Government advice is that pupils should return to school in full school uniform and that will be our expectation.

As was mentioned in my letter to parents and carers on 16th July, from September, the school will revert to its usual uniform expectations. Please click [here](#) for details. 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.

### **Behaviour expectations**

The school will work closely with staff, pupils and parents/carers to ensure that behaviour expectations are clearly understood, and consistently supported, taking account of individual needs. The school's Positive Behaviour policy has been updated to include expectations linked directly to COVID-19. In relation to COVID-19, the school accepts and expects that pupils (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 pupils and staff safe, then appropriate sanctions will be in place.

I trust families will appreciate that, where a pupil is unable to follow our safety measures, then the school will have to assess suitability of face to face provision and consider whether learning would be more appropriate remotely through Google Classroom.

### **Contingency planning**

In the event of a local outbreak, the school will work with the local authority and/or Public Health Wales team to inform any decision about forced full and/or partial closure. For example, partial closure may involve remaining open only for identified pupils, such as vulnerable pupils or an identified year group or the children of essential key workers. In the event of individuals or groups of self-isolating pupils, as well as in the event of a forced full and/or partial closure, learning will be provided remotely. There will be a continuing expectation that pupils will engage in Google Classroom to submit homework and to access resources to support their learning.

Finally, I would like to thank you for all of your messages of support, both throughout the school year and in the past few months, in particular. Despite the unique challenges of the year, it has been a pleasure to work with you and your children and I look forward to another exciting year together.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Jarrett  
Headteacher

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