



BISHOP VAUGHAN
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

10 March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are thoroughly looking forward to welcoming our pupils back to school in the coming weeks and we would like to share the following key information to support you and your child in preparing for the return to school-based provision:

1. Schedule for Year Groups to Return

As detailed in my letter to you of Friday 5th March, the on-site provision this term is as follows:

Year 11 and Year 13	Monday 15 th March – Friday 26 th March
Year 10 and 12	Thursday 18 th March – Friday 26 th March
Year 7-9 Check In Days (one day per year group)	
Year 7	Wednesday 24 th March
Year 8	Thursday 25 th March
Year 9	Friday 26 th March

Unless Welsh Government advise us to the contrary, we anticipate that all pupils will be in school from the start of the Summer term, Monday 12th April, onwards.

Online learning (and paper packs for those who have opted for them) will continue to be provided for any days that year groups are not scheduled for on-site provision, up to and including Friday 26th March.

Lessons will follow the normal school timetable (week commencing 15th March – Week 1; week commencing 22nd March – Week 2).

2. Health and Safety

While we cannot entirely mitigate the risk of virus transmission in a school setting, we prioritise your child's safety at all times and the actions we have taken reflect this. We update our risk assessments continuously, utilising all available information to implement measures in line with Welsh Government and Local Authority guidance.

The following measures, in place in the last phase of school-based provision, will continue:

- Reducing the number of contacts for your child in order to mitigate the risk of virus transmission
 - ✓ Zones are designated for specific year groups

- ✓ Where possible, teachers will travel between classrooms rather than pupils doing so, to reduce the numbers circulating in the school corridors
- ✓ Pupils in Years 7-9 will continue to have their own classroom base to which their teachers will arrive each lesson. The exceptions to these teaching spaces will be for PE and other practical lessons.
- Sanitising stations on entry to the school site, around the school and in every classroom
- Frequent cleaning taking place throughout the school day, in particular of high touch areas such as door handles
- Sanitisation of shared spaces such as computer resources and the Sixth Form Study Centre between users
- Rearranging of all pupil desks to face the front of the room in line with current Welsh Government guidance
- A one-way system in operation around the school buildings and site
- Two metre distancing markers throughout the school site as reminders that social distancing must be observed wherever possible
- Reminder notices throughout the school site that good respiratory hygiene practices must be observed, using the 'Catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- Designated entrances and drop-off zones for each year group to further reduce the mixing of year groups. **The arrangements regarding the drop off zone for your child remain the same as last term.**
- Face coverings will continue to be used in all indoor communal areas in which pupils cannot socially distance, including dining areas and corridors
- Face coverings will continue to be worn on school and public transport
- Staggered breaktimes and lunchtimes
- Test, Trace, Protect operating procedures in place
- Strict adherence to the guidance that no person should attend the school site if displaying any of the three main Covid symptoms
 - ✓ A high temperature
 - ✓ A new persistent cough
 - ✓ A change to or loss of the sense of smell or taste
 and that no person should attend the school site if a member of their household is demonstrating these symptoms. Please see the guidance on this in point 3.

In addition, the Welsh Government and the Local Authority guidance has been further updated in preparation for the forthcoming return to school. This has been deemed necessary because, although local infection rates have dropped considerably, more infectious virus variants are now in circulation in Wales which require additional precautionary measures.

The following measures therefore also apply at present:

- Face coverings must now be worn in **all** indoor areas of the school where 2m social distancing cannot be maintained, and **this now includes within the classroom**. Pupils do not need to wear face masks outside unless they are congregating close together for any reason.

Face coverings should be three layered and stocks have been provided by the Local Authority for all pupils to receive three of these, so that they will be able to wear one and to have a spare whilst the third is being washed. Please, however, ensure that your child is provided with a face covering for their first day back in school in order to allow us time to distribute these, and please ensure that, following that, your child always attends school with a suitable face covering each day.

- School staff and pupils from Year 10 to Year 13 inclusive will be offered the opportunity to participate in lateral flow testing for identification of asymptomatic cases. Please note that this is **voluntary** and that no testing will take place on the school site. All pupils in Years 10-13 will be provided with information about this process and consent forms will be provided for parents and carers to indicate whether they would like their child to be provided with test kits for home use. Further information on this will be provided separately for pupils in the relevant year groups. Please note also that **this does not replace the current arrangements for testing any person with symptoms**. If your child or anyone else in the household is displaying Covid-19 symptoms, a PCR test (this is the type that is taken at a testing site or sent through the post) must be booked as detailed in point 3.

We are aware that some parents and pupils may have differing perspectives regarding some of the measures that we are required to put in place, but your understanding that we are bound to implement these measures is appreciated. Ultimately, everything that we do is with the overriding aim of keeping our pupils and their families safe. We have always been thoroughly impressed by our pupils' adherence to these measures and by their maturity in adapting to them. We have no doubt that this maturity and adaptability will also be evident in the forthcoming return to school.

3. Illness

The current Public Health Wales advice states that any person with Covid-19 symptoms must isolate straight away and book a test. This can be done online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> or by telephoning either 01639 862757 or 119.

Other members of their household and extended household must also isolate at this point.

The current rules regarding self-isolation are that you should self-isolate for 10 days if:

- you develop symptoms; this means you may have coronavirus
- you've tested positive for Covid-19, even if you do not have symptoms
- you live with someone, or someone from your extended household has developed symptoms or tested positive
- you've been contacted by the TTP service and told to self-isolate because you have been identified as a contact of a positive case of coronavirus

If anyone becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature whilst in school, they will be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance: (<https://gov.wales/self-isolation-stay-home-guidance-households-possiblecoronavirus>)

If a pupil is awaiting collection, they will be moved to a designated room and supported by a member of staff in full PPE should they require direct support.

4. Childcare

The childcare facility will remain open until the end of the Spring term (up to and including Friday 26th March) for vulnerable pupils and the children of key workers. Booking forms must be completed in order to secure a place and up-to-date information regarding this facility can be found here: <https://www.bishopvaughan.co.uk/childcare-booking-forms>

5. The School Day

The start and finish times of the school day remain unaltered. Importantly, however, the school gates will not be opened until **8.30am**. This is to ensure supervised sanitisation on entry to school.

Within the day, lunchtimes and breaktimes remain staggered to reduce the numbers of pupils in corridors and communal spaces at any given time, and to allow for cleaning of communal spaces such as dining areas between users.

6. Catering and School Meals

As is the case in schools throughout Swansea, there will be no catering provision until after the Easter break. All pupils will need to bring a drink and a packed lunch, including those entitled to free school meals, up to and including Friday 26th March. In recognition of this need, the Local Authority is continuing the payments/ food parcel arrangement with those families entitled to free school meals.

7. Pupil Attendance

Please continue to notify us in the usual way if your child is unable to attend school, providing the reason for absence. This will enable us to record attendance accurately. Please see the information in section 3 ('Illness') for additional guidance about the symptoms which would necessitate your child being kept at home.

8. Uniform and Equipment

Details of the school uniform can be found by following the link on this page: <https://www.bishopvaughan.co.uk/school-uniform>

We understand that in a small number of cases pupils will have outgrown their school uniform and may require new some new items which aren't currently available for purchase. If this is the case please send a note in with your child to explain that this is the case. Issues where pupils aren't wearing the correct uniform and don't have a note will be followed up in the usual way under the school's Discipline for Learning policy.

In addition, pupils will need to bring the following equipment to school each day:

- Pen
- Pencils
- Coloured pencils
- Pencil sharpener
- Ruler
- Eraser
- Calculator
- Compass, protractor and set square for Years 7 to 11

Pupils do not need to bring PE kit for the remainder of this term unless they have opted for GCSE/ A-Level/ BTEC PE or Sport.

Families are advised that the Welsh Government have broadened the criteria for those eligible for the School Uniform Grant. Details can be found here:

<https://www.swansea.gov.uk/schooluniformgrant>

9. Transport

Transport arrangements will resume as normal from Monday 15th March. Any queries related to school transport should be directed to the Local Authority Transport Team directly, who will be able to provide the most up-to-date advice. They can be contacted on 01792 636347.

10. Acts of Worship

While there will be no large gatherings such as assemblies until the guidance indicates that this is appropriate and safe, daily acts of worship will continue in the classroom settings, and in addition there will be virtual assemblies provided by senior staff that will be viewed within the classroom settings.

11. Learning Zone

We are planning to resume this provision at the earliest possible opportunity however it will not be in place at the start of the return-to-school period. For up-to-date information, consent forms and booking forms, please see this link:

<https://www.bishopvaughan.co.uk/learning-zone>

12. Keeping Up-To-Date

As you will already be aware, the guidance for schools is constantly being updated to reflect the changing national picture and emerging guidance. We will continue to post all updates here: <https://www.bishopvaughan.co.uk/covid-19-letters> and on our social media accounts, as well as contacting you via MyEd and text message. We ask that you check these sources regularly for news and information.

Finally, we would like to thank all of the parents and carers in our community for the enormous task you have undertaken in ensuring your child's continuity of learning. Whilst none of us could have foreseen this situation prevailing for as long as it has when, just a year ago, Covid-19 was just beginning to impact upon us locally, the efforts made by all in responding to it have been nothing short of phenomenal. We have no doubt that your children will remember this period throughout their lifetimes

and, whilst it has been a time of great struggle and sacrifice for most, and indeed of tragedy for some, your children will remember too all that was done to support them throughout this time.

We hope that the pressure upon our families will lessen considerably with the return to school-based learning, and please do communicate to your child just how much we are looking forward to welcoming our pupils.

With our best wishes, as always, for the continued good health of all in our school community –

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E Pole', written in a cursive style.

Mrs E Pole
Headteacher