

# Arrangements for September 2020

## Planned approaches across maintained schools and PRUs

On 9 July 2020 the Minister for Education announced plans for all pupils to return to school from 1 September 2020. Following this announcement, Welsh Government updated their operational guidance and guidance for learning:

**Operational guidance for schools and settings from the autumn term (version 3)**

**Guidance on learning in schools and settings from the autumn term**

During the past few months, schools and PRUs have had to adapt quickly to new arrangements and are coming to terms with a new way of working. This document outlines how schools and PRUs have started to plan for September and sets out approaches that schools and PRUs are taking to support them in minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission. They will be amending and updating their plans regularly in light of their experiences and in response to updates to Welsh Government guidance documents as new evidence and information emerges. Whilst we recognise that there will not be a one size fits all approach to implementing these planned approaches, the aim of this document is to support school and PRU leaders to reflect on their approaches to maximise learning and deliver school or PRU business and consider whether any of the examples in the document could help when refining their arrangements. This document captures a variety of approaches in response to common challenges across sectors. It includes practical strategies and approaches for **primary**, **secondary** and **special** schools and **PRUs** about the following themes. The cameos outlined in this document have been shared with us by school leaders and also gathered from discussions with headteachers during engagement calls.

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### Staff

- Supporting staff and headteacher wellbeing
- Professional learning
- Partial closures

**Thank you to the schools and providers who contributed to this piece of work**

## Before and after school

### Before the school day starts and arriving at school

In one **local authority**, the director of education hosts daily 'drop-in' sessions at the start of each morning via video-conferencing. This allows headteachers to ask questions about pressing matters, whilst providing an opportunity for local authority officials to keep track of the challenges faced at the operational level. One headteacher commented that they regularly tune in even if they have no question, as they often learn valuable tips from other schools' experiences.

One **primary** school provided a 'packing list' for parents, explaining what pupils should bring to school and what they should leave at home. For example, they no longer allowed pupils to bring their own stationery to school. However, all pupils should bring enough bottled water for the day. The list also included helpful advice on clothing, to take into account the plan to spend as much time as possible outdoors. For example, pupils should bring in sun hats on fine days, whilst the school recommends a change of clothes in a carrier bag in the event of wet weather.

One **primary** school created class booklets explaining how the school day would look for each individual class. They included many photographs and the text was in child-friendly language. This meant that parents could talk through the changes with their children to reassure and prepare them for returning to school.

One primary school will stagger start and finish times for each class. Pupils will enter and exit the school via classroom doors

that open directly onto the playground. The school will put heart shapes on the playground for the children to use when lining up and have coined a phrase 'stand on a heart two metres apart'.

In September, another **primary** school will stagger start and finish times. However, they will allocate specific slots depending on pupils' surnames, in order to attempt to facilitate arrangements for families, as shown in the table below. They have closed some entrances to the school site after recognising that narrow approaches and blind spots would make social distancing difficult in these areas.

### Drop-off at school

Surnames A-G	Arrive from 8.40am	62 families
Surnames H-P	Arrive from 8.50am	63 families
Surnames R-X	Arrive from 9.00am	58 families

### Pick-up from school

Surnames A-G	Collect from 3.00pm	62 families
Surnames H-P	Collect from 3.10pm	63 families
Surnames R-X	Collect from 3.20pm	58 families

Another **primary** school decided not to stagger arrival at school to make it easier for parents to drop off siblings. It recognised

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that, as pupils already used multiple gates around the perimeter of the grounds to enter the school, this already created distancing naturally. It ensured that all gates were secured in the open position as pupils arrived in school to minimise the risk of spreading COVID-19. All classrooms have external doors, and therefore they changed the usual drop-off points so that pupils entered directly into their base room.

One **secondary** school has introduced a new school timetable with staggered arrival and pick up times.

### Staggered arrival times

Year 7 – 8.20am    Year 8 – 8.25am    Year 9 – 8.30am

Year 10 – 8.35am    Year 11 – 8.40am

### Staggered departure times

Year 7 – 2.35pm    Year 8 – 2.40pm    Year 9 – 2.45pm

Year 10 – 2.50pm    Year 11 – 2.55pm

### Entry and exit for pupils

Year 7, Year 9 and Year 11 to use the school's top gates, on one road, and Year 8 and Year 10 to use bottom gates, on another road.

These arrangements will allow for a 10-minute break between year groups using the given entrance/exit point, to allow for smoother flow and lower risk of contact with peers from a different contact group.



One **special** school has put in place a new traffic management plan that has already brought many benefits. The plan includes the use of additional entry points into the school buildings, which has reduced the flow of people around the main school entrance. To reduce movement at the start and end of the day, the plan requires escorts and parents to remain in their vehicles until advised by staff. The school has also introduced a fifteen-minute interval between the start of the day for its primary and secondary phases.

An all-age multi-site **PRU** has planned a common schedule for the arrival and daily routines of its pupils across each site. As pupils arrive each morning, they will place any food and drinks consumed on the way to the PRU in a dedicated waste bin. They will then use hand sanitisers on entering the building. A dispenser has been fitted to the wall at the pupils' point of entry. Each pupil

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will go to their respective form rooms where they can place an order for breakfast. This will be brought to pupils individually to minimise movement around the PRU.



### Breakfast and after school clubs

One small rural Welsh-medium **primary** school will reopen its breakfast club and after-school provision from 7 September. The headteacher feels that the number attending are likely to be manageable, and they will be able to apply the social distancing measures they have in place for the school day to these additional sessions.

One large **primary** school hasn't operated its breakfast club since reopening at the end of the summer term. It also decided to suspend it for the first few weeks in September, until the school gets used to running to full capacity again.

Another large **primary** school will reopen its breakfast club with

adaptations in September. Pupils will use the same classrooms that they will be in for the rest of the day, with food delivered to them in a pack. They feel that this approach will be possible as they expect the numbers attending to be reduced. They also plan to reintroduce after school childcare in the school hall from the third week of term, after an initial 'settling in' period.

In response to the commitment to continue to provide breakfast club for all pupils, one large bilingual **secondary** school offers free toast to every pupil who attends the breakfast club. In order to cater for increased numbers and limit social contact, the school plans on staggering the start times and finish times of the breakfast club, breaks and lunch times, increasing the amount of time available to safely cater for all pupils that attend.

The governing body at one **special** school has decided to continue with their after-school club from September as this is a lifeline for many of their working parents and carers.

To ensure safety, school leaders have arranged so that pupils from different contact groups will work within a specific group during the after-school club.

They have agreed the following arrangements:

- Increased staffing in case of absenteeism
- Agreed that in the short term they will only provide for those learners currently accessing the after-school club, with a plan to extend on 1 October
- Re-configured activities with a greater focus on smaller groups

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## Before and after school

and enhanced staffing arrangements

- Not providing transport home at the end of club – this will be a parental responsibility
- Extended and re-configured cleaning routines to ensure that cleaning of the after-school area is completed last thing / early morning
- Parents/carers to provide a snack and school to provide bottled water
- Increase of school club hours to 2 hours
- Arranged that SLT lead will be on duty until the last pupil has left
- Parents to remain in their cars and staff to escort pupils to their parents

An all-age multi-site **PRU** will continue to provide breakfast clubs as normal in September. Warm drinks will be provided and made in each pupil's designated cup. However, where older pupils normally make their own breakfast as part of a life skills programme, the PRU will reduce the menu and choices, limiting these to the provision of items that pupils can 'grab and go'. This approach is to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

### End of school arrangements

Parents have respected one **primary** school's formal but staggered drop-off and collection procedures, and everything has run smoothly. Parents like the routines, the well-organised handover arrangements and visible staff presence, albeit from a suitable distance. The school is confident in continuing these systems for September as they are understood by parents and pupils, and work effectively.

One large **primary** school developed a successful strategy for ensuring the safety of its pupils at the end of the school day. Firstly, it operated a staggered start and end time for all pupils, allowing 15 minutes for each year group. Parents were asked to stand on markers placed two metres apart outside the school gate. Pupils remained in a designated area with their teacher whilst waiting for their parents to pick them up. When the teacher saw a parent, they instructed their child to join a queue inside the school gate, again on markers placed two metres apart. When they got to the front of the queue (the school gate), they were handed over to their parent by another member of staff.

Another **primary** school has a clear one-way route marked out for parents to follow when collecting their children. This means that families do not cross paths as they leave the site.

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One secondary school is staggering exit times for different year groups to minimise mixing on exit from school:

Year 7 & Year 8	2.55pm
Year 9 & Year 10	3.05pm
Year 11 to Year 13	3.10pm

One **PRU** has provided guidance for pupils and staff to help them understand that they should not use the car park and the school grounds as a space to socialise. In addition, pupils should leave the site at their designated time slot and use hand sanitiser before leaving. This approach is to minimise crossover and maximise cleansing routines.

At one school, when parents or escorts drop off or collect their child from school in a vehicle, they wait in their vehicles in the car park adjacent to the school until called by staff. Their child is then escorted to or from the school by a member of school staff. Parents and escorts are required to remain in their vehicles wherever possible to minimise contact with school staff. Parents dropping off or collecting their children on foot use a one-way system to enter and exit the school site. This approach will minimise contact between adults outside and around the school.



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### Cleaning and hygiene

One **primary** school has ensured that there are hand sanitisation points at every entrance. It has allocated members of support staff to monitor pupils as they arrive in school to make sure that they make appropriate use of the sanitiser. It also has 'hygiene stations' in every class. These desks or trolleys include a range of sanitisation products.

Pupils are encouraged to make use of the products regularly during the school day, and older pupils help to clean their own work area and resources. Staff remind pupils to wash their hands more regularly than usual. Teachers regularly discuss how pupils can help to control the virus by washing hands at key times when they are at home, for example when they return home after going for a walk.

One **primary** school has benefited from an increase in the cleaning hours available to it. With support from their local authority, it has been able to ensure that a caretaker is on site throughout the school day rather than for limited periods. Whilst the school kitchen remains closed, the local authority has redeployed the catering staff as additional cleaners. They make sure that they prioritise cleaning surfaces that are touched regularly, such as door handles, tables, chairs, toilets and taps.

One **secondary** school has designated entrances for each year group and has set up additional sinks at each entrance to the school. Pupils will be expected to wash their hands at regular

intervals during the school day, and hand sanitiser dispensers have been placed outside all classroom doors for pupils and staff to sanitise their hands when entering and exiting rooms.

One **secondary** school has employed its cleaners full time on site to clean general areas and to wipe down surfaces in classrooms when pupils are outside. This has been key to ensuring confidence amongst staff, pupils and parents during the initial return to school period.

One **secondary** school has established a new system to signal if classrooms have been cleaned during the school day. If a green card is posted on a classroom door, it signifies that the room has been cleaned and is ready for use. If the classroom door sports a red card, the room has been used but hasn't been cleaned as yet. Staff and pupils are advised not to enter rooms with a red sign on the door. A classroom with a yellow card on its door has been cleaned and is reserved for use the next day. Staff and pupils are asked not to enter these rooms to support hygiene arrangements.

One **secondary** school allows staff and pupils to wear face coverings during the school day if this supports their wellbeing and confidence. Pupils who choose not to wear face coverings must keep them in a plastic bag to store safely during the school day, ready for use when travelling home on school or public transport.

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One **secondary** school has developed a hygiene 'check list' of frequently touched surfaces that will be cleaned using designated materials. These include:

- bannisters and/or balustrades
- classroom desks and tables
- toilet facilities
- door and window handles
- furniture
- light switches
- reception desks
- computer equipment
- sports equipment
- telephones
- biometric scanners, where used



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One **secondary** plans to introduce the following arrangements to ensure that the school is a safe place for staff and pupils:

### Measures within the classroom/workspace

- Staff maintain distance from learners, wherever possible; teachers maintain distance at front of class [demarkation already in place in each classroom]; adults should maintain 2-metre distance from each other. Teachers will use the visualiser function on the iPad to model work.
- Hygiene packs are available for teachers on each teacher desk, containing wipes, anti-bac spray; staff are encouraged to wipe down their workstation before and after use.
- Plastic hygiene covers have been purchased for all computer keyboards, to facilitate cleaning before and after use.
- Desks face forward; pupils are sat side-by-side. Individual and pair work will take priority over group work, to reduce movement of pupils within the classroom.
- Classrooms are to remain well-ventilated, with windows open, air-conditioning decommissioned, as appropriate, and classroom doors kept open [where appropriate]; built into the revised fire evacuation procedures is provision for ensuring that classroom doors are closed by the member of staff upon exiting the classroom.
- Office configurations have been reviewed, to provide for one adult only to be working in a space that would not allow for 2m-distancing.

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### Measures elsewhere

- No assemblies; the school will continue its successful arrangement set up from 29 June, whereby the Head of Year conducts year group assembly using Microsoft Teams, projected onto the whiteboard and sound transmitted through speakers.
- Minimal use of staff rooms – staff will be taking breaks at different times, in conjunction with the amended structure to the school day; the main staff room has provision for a limited number of adults at one time, with appropriate markings to support optimum hygiene arrangements; there will be additional rooms dedicated to staff for rest/lunch breaks.
- Shared resources (PE, art, science, ICT, music) – will be cleaned between contact groups; where available, certain sets of equipment will be restricted to particular contact groups for their sole use.
- All pupils will remain on site at lunchtime (normally, Year 11 is permitted to leave site at lunchtime).
- No parents' evenings will be held during the autumn term; the school will capitalise upon successful arrangements established during lockdown for regular and efficient parent consultation/communication, for example: Parent & Carer Forum meetings to take place on Teams; parental interviews over Teams, to minimise the need for face-to-face meetings in school; regular text messages and emails, as well as more routine use of

the Parents' section of the school website for access to key documentation/information; dedicated school email addresses for parents to raise queries, which are expediently addressed. Usually, during the autumn term, the school hosts a Year 11 parents' evening, but has moved this to the start of January, and is looking to implement a 'tighter' booking system, by pupil surname, to reduce the number of adults in the hall at any one time.

- The annual Presentation Evening will move from its usual October slot to the spring/summer term 2021.

The needs of pupils at **special** schools mean that cleaning is routinely required to meet infection control standards. However, revised arrangements and protective measures have required enhanced arrangements. For example, in one school, the areas for the delivery of physiotherapy now require thorough cleaning after each pupil. In addition, the local authority has allocated extra cleaning staff to the school in line with its response to infection control.

During the three-week 'check-in and catch-up' period, one all-age multi-site **PRU** supported pupils to understand the need for good hand hygiene. This was to establish regular routines for the day and in preparation for the return of all pupils in September. Sanitising stations are now in place on entering all buildings, and additional dispensers are placed to enable pupils to sanitise their hands prior to entering the toilets, in line with Welsh Government guidance. For those learning at home throughout this period,

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centre-based videos were shared with these pupils and their parents to prepare for the changes in September. The **PRU** also has a very few pupils who have an aversion to washing hands and using sanitiser. For these pupils, individual risk assessments have been undertaken, and additional work and support provided for these pupils ready for their return.

### Social distancing – the school building

One **local authority** developed risk assessments to support headteachers, and an app to help calculate the new safe capacity of schools, based on their floor space. The local authority is conscious that there should be a consistent approach to schools reopening due to the volume of people involved and potential risks.

One **primary** school has created the role of 'social distancing champion'. This member of staff co-ordinates social distancing procedures throughout the school, ensuring that measures taken continue to have a high profile. They celebrate the efforts of those who adhere to the current regulations well.

One **primary** school is planning to repurpose the school hall when all pupils return in September as well as making use of any unused teaching spaces. It is setting up room dividers in the hall. This means that, even as social distancing measures are eased, pupils will have more space and it will be possible to create smaller teaching groups.



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To help with social distancing, one **primary** school has adapted some of its outdoor areas in the foundation phase. For example, it has used physical education resources to make simple boundaries and barriers in these areas. This approach helps to ensure that pupils from different classrooms no longer mix when working on outdoor tasks.

One large **primary** school, that has extensive outdoor areas at its disposal, made effective use of this resource. Staff divided the outdoor areas so that each class had a dedicated part that they could use throughout the day. In so doing, each class was kept away from the others so as to minimise contact.

One **primary** school sees its staff room as a place where teachers and assistants can relax. However, it is worried that unintentional social distancing lapses could occur, especially as staff members become more confident and used to the new work environment. It has decided to remove unnecessary furniture from the staff room and put up suitable signage. For example, a sign above the photocopier reminds staff members to wash their hands before using the machine.

One small, rural 11-16 **secondary** school has divided the school building into five zones. Single year groups enter the school building from different points of entry and remain in their appointed zone throughout the school day. Generally, teachers move around the zones to deliver their lessons. There are regular opportunities throughout the school day for learners to exit the classrooms to exercise and get some fresh air. It is not possible for the school

to limit class sizes to 20 pupils, and therefore lessons also take place in the school canteen, hall, library and gymnasium in order to allow more space for groups of up to 30 learners. There is a sanitising station in every teaching room and learners and staff are expected to sanitise their hands on entry and exit.

One **secondary** school has organised the staffroom and staff workroom to allow for social distancing. Cloth chairs have been removed to allow for easier cleaning and chairs have been arranged to comply with social distancing rules. Social distancing markers are in place for queuing for the fridge, microwave, cold and hot water and the sink. Staff must not leave dirty dishes, cutlery or cups in or around the sink. All used items should be washed and put away by the colleague using them and all leftover food, and packaging waste should also be disposed of correctly. In the staff workroom, staff are to ensure that they clear worktops, tables and desks at the end of each day to allow for full cleaning of surfaces and devices.

In one **secondary** school, pupils are grouped into classes within year bubbles. Year bubbles will mostly remain in designated zones within the school site throughout the school day. Shared rooms, such as halls and dining areas, are cleaned between different bubbles using them.

One **secondary** school has created zones across the school to limit pupil movement. Each zone has specific classrooms and entry and exit points.

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Zone	Year group	Area	Number of class-rooms	Entry/ exit points
A	7	Welsh block (L1 – 5) and Rms 3 & 4	7	Top gates
B	8	Rms 9-13, 15-16, A4	8	Bottom gates
C	9	Maths block (Rms 19 -25)	7	Top gates
D	10	Science block (S1 – 8)	8	Bottom gates
E	11	Rms 30-35, M5, M6	8	Top gates

One **special** school has planned to include adjoining corridor and toilet areas in the bubble designated for each class. This gives staff more control over the number of contacts they and the pupils have. It also enables staff to control and manage their environment, for instance to clean equipment regularly. In addition, health staff such as specialist nurses, physiotherapists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists will work from centrally based areas in the school. From these areas, they can provide advice and guidance to school staff, and move between the bubbles to support individual pupils, rather than having pupils and their support assistants come to them.

At one **PRU**, staff took the opportunity during the closure to make adaptations to the building in preparation for pupils' return. The outside area has undergone significant work with the installation of a parkour area, a large sheltered canopy area, and a running track. This area is intended for use as an extension to the learning environment for all pupils. Class areas have been painted and cleared of all clutter to maximise learning spaces for all pupils and staff. Corridors, which are quite wide, have markings to indicate social distancing. A new art classroom has been established and learning recovery areas have been refurbished and made fit for purpose and available to both floors of the building. Key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils will have their own designated floors of the building where they will have lessons delivered. Pupil numbers allow for small class numbers, which will minimise pupils mixing during the school day. Lunch and break times will be staggered and pupils will have opportunities to interact socially with peers, but with social distancing measures in place.

### Social distancing – grouping pupils

One small rural Welsh-medium **primary** school is planning a phased approach to opening in September. All its classes are mixed-age. It will invite pupils in Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 to attend school on the third day of term (following two days of staff preparations). All these pupils will have new teachers. Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6 will join them the following day. Pupils in the new reception class will be invited in for three days during the second week of term before continuing on a full-time basis.

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They will be joined by nursery pupils who will start school on 14 September, having given the older pupils time to get used to their new routines.



One **primary** school is planning a staggered approach for increasing pupil numbers during the first fortnight of September. Every year, it normally gradually builds up the number of days that nursery and reception pupils attend, so it will continue that practice this year too. In addition, it intends to invite all Year 2 and Year 6 pupils as full cohorts in the first instance. By the end of the second week, the headteacher expects the school to be operating at full capacity, and to look as it did before the period of school repurposing. However, it will continue to limit mixing between groups, and staff will continue to adhere to social distancing measures as required.

The headteacher of one **primary** school stated that, when the time comes to increase the number of pupils attending school, leaders will endeavour to increase its capacity safely by:

- utilising classrooms that aren't currently used as base rooms for year groups
- continuing to stagger school starting times, end times, lunchtimes and break times to ensure that pupils do not congregate unnecessarily

One **primary** school has identified a number of steps it can take to attempt to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spreading between pupil groups. Pupils will remain in their base classroom for all lessons rather than moving to a subject specialist's room such as during their own teacher's planning, preparation and assessment time. This minimises the need for pupils to move unnecessarily through the school. The school also intends to drop its usual approach to 'ability setting' for numeracy lessons.

Nearly all schools are considering how social distancing guidance can be applied in relation to the needs of individual pupils in the class, for example those that need physical support or communicate through touch. For these pupils, it is important to consider what additional preventative measures may be needed to protect them, others in the class, and the staff working with them. This planning includes, for example, where pupils require individual support, the need for a space specifically designated for them to use with staff.

From September, only pupils from the same year group will be able to use one **secondary** school's behaviour support base on any one day.

One secondary school has adapted its fire alarm and emergency

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lockdown procedures to comply with social distancing measures. Fire evacuation procedures remain the same with the addition that pupils should assemble in their bubble groups and social distance between bubble groups. Social distancing will be encouraged whilst exiting the building and assembling. Emergency lockdown procedures will be executed within the designated bubble areas/rooms. There will be practice drills during the first half term.

One **secondary** school recognises that the practicalities of managing contact groups or bubbles from September is complex and challenging. This is because of the demands of delivering examination courses at GCSE and AS/A2 level, where students follow a broad range of options unique to their own individual pathway. In line with Welsh Government guidance, the school will create larger bubbles to deliver the full range of curriculum subjects and enable students to receive specialist teaching. Where practicable, the school will seek to maintain class bubbles for key stage 3 students through the delivery of lessons in form groups. However, to ensure that this does not negatively impact the quality of learning, form groups will be revised to group students broadly by ability.

As part of the planning for a full return, the school has identified how student and staff contact will be reduced, as much as is reasonably practicable and possible, to include:

- grouping students together in bubbles by individual year groups

- allocating year group bubbles to designated areas of the school site to avoid contact with other bubbles
- wherever possible, limiting the number of people that students and staff come into contact with during lessons through form group teaching

Teaching and support staff will be able to operate across different classes and year group bubbles. However, insofar as is reasonably practicable, the school will seek to minimise this. Where staff need to move between classes and bubbles, they should socially distance from students and other staff as much as they can, ideally 2m from other adults.

The headteacher of an all-age multi-site **PRU** has confirmed that all pupils will be allocated to learning groups of between two to eight pupils. These pupils have been carefully selected to ensure that they can work together productively. Pupils will learn in dedicated rooms and remain mostly with key teaching and support staff. There will be limited movement around the building, and the hygiene procedures used in the last few weeks of the summer term will continue. Most alternative providers have confirmed that they will be open, and leaders will work with these providers to resume the individualised learning packages for relevant pupils. In one small PRU, plans are in place for it to operate as one whole-school contact group, with clearly defined smaller class contact groups. This approach is to help the PRU to ensure limited social interaction during break, lunchtimes and class times to limit the risk of the spread of infection to staff and pupils.

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### Pupil movement in school

Together with a staggered start and end time, to minimise unnecessary physical contact, one large **primary** school operates a one-way system throughout its large Victorian building. It marked the area outside the main entrance with spots to encourage safe social distancing, placed hand sanitising stations at the entrance, and marked the corridor and stairways with arrows to signal the one-way system. Staff were placed at notable points throughout the building to monitor adherence. This enabled each group of pupils to get to their classroom as easily as and as safely as possible. Arrangements for using toilets were clear. Support staff accompanied all pupils to the toilet area, as needed, and ensured that they washed their hands well before returning to their class. This ensured that pupils did not congregate unnecessarily.

Another **primary** school will adopt a 'stand back and wait' policy. This means that it will teach pupils (and staff) to consider other people's movements in corridors. For example, everyone will stand back in a waiting area and wait for someone to pass before going down the corridor to avoid crossing paths. When following someone down a corridor, they will remain 2 metres behind the person, with reminder signage visible.

In one secondary school, all classroom doors will be kept open to reduce the need for pupils and staff to touch the door handles.

One Welsh-medium **secondary** school has trialled live streaming lessons into multiple classrooms within the school building. This

allows multiple small groups to be taught simultaneously while minimising contact between groups of pupils. This facility allows pupils who are unable to attend school because they are shielding to be supported remotely.



At one **special** school, leaders have implemented one-way systems around the building, including frequently used areas such as the hall and dining area. They have reduced corridor traffic by accessing classrooms through doors that open directly onto outside areas. With the support of the local authority, the school has installed additional gates to enable zoning of the school's external areas to support social distancing measures during play and lunch times.

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The headteacher of an all-age multi-site **PRU** confirmed that none of its centres is large enough to allow the development of one-way systems. However, due to the relatively small numbers on each site, movement around the centres will be supervised by adults to ensure limited mixing of groups. Where possible, pupils will remain in the same classrooms for lessons as opposed to moving between classrooms. Where there is movement with groups needing to use a specialist area that has been used by a different group before them, the area will be cleaned and 'rested' between use.

At one multi-site **PRU**, movement around the building will be restricted, with staff staying in their designated areas. There will be no mixing between phases as all departments will work in contact groups as much as is practicable, with no general requirement for pupil movement between departments. Pupils and staff will enter and exit the building through designated entrances only to reduce movement through the building and social contact.

### Classroom arrangements

One **primary** school intends to ensure that each pupil has a suitable workspace in the classrooms by reintroducing desks that were removed during the 'check-in, catch up, prepare' period. However, it will avoid moving any other unnecessary furniture or resources back into classrooms in order to make it as easy as possible to keep the rooms clean. It has decided to position desks

in forward-facing rows rather than in groups to try to reduce risk further. It will continue to keep windows open to improve ventilation so long as it is mild enough to do so.

In a large **primary** school, staff removed as much furniture as possible from each class to allow pupils to sit at desks that adhered to social distancing recommendations. In a Year 2 class, during class discussions or at story sessions, pupils were instructed to sit on coloured spots placed two metres away from each other. They enjoyed this novelty and were keen to adhere to it.

One **secondary** school has established protocols for classroom arrangements, which include:

- having pupils facing one direction, with all desks facing towards the teacher
- teachers teaching from the front of the class and not circulating around pupils as they normally would
- limiting or avoiding group work
- opening windows
- not using fans or heaters
- making alternative arrangements for school assemblies

In one **secondary** school, leaders have not placed a limit on class sizes beyond ordinary school operations. However, adults will remain at the front of the class and limit their movement in order to maintain a safe distance from pupils. In order to maintain social distancing between teachers and pupils, the school is encouraging

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teachers to make use of classroom technology such as visualisers to model work. Classroom based resources, such as books and games, can be used and shared within the contact group but will be cleaned regularly, along with all frequently touched surfaces.

In one **special** school, leaders have made arrangements for pupils to learn in small bubbles. This helps to ensure that staff have close contact with small numbers of pupils and to maintain more effective hygiene arrangements within each bubble. Staff have more control over their environment and more responsibility for ensuring that all members of the bubble adhere to safe practices.

As part of the hub arrangements at one **PRU** for primary age pupils, classes were arranged to enable social distancing. Soft furnishings and areas of the class such as the play tents and soft toys were removed. Visual timetables are in all classes to support pupils on when, how and for how long to wash their hands. These arrangements will continue for the return of all pupils in September when class areas will be reduced to have four pupils and two staff in a zoned learning area, with pupil and staff movement restricted.

### Resources and equipment, including uniform

Working with schools, one local authority has identified pupils who have little or no access to the internet. It arranged to install internet connections in those homes and intend to review the situation in September. It also encouraged schools to loan computer hardware such as laptops and tablet computers to pupils, and provided grants to schools to be able to purchase additional machines.

One **secondary** school has established protocols for resources, equipment and uniform. These include:

- providing equipment packs for pupils
- staff not lending pens to pupils
- avoiding shared resources in practical subjects, where possible
- ensuring that pupils wipe equipment with anti-bacterial wipes and/or spray before and after use
- developing routines for sanitising pupils' hands and wiping desks at the beginning and end of every lesson
- pupils needing uniform to be sent to a separate entrance; any uniform lent to pupils to be washed at the end of each day
- staff to wipe printers with disinfectant spray prior and after use; staff not to refill paper as only the reprographics technician will do this
- staff to print but not photocopy materials, as photocopying increases the risk of surface contamination; any urgent photocopying to be done by the technician

One **secondary** school is revising its 'Bring Your Own Device' policy in the light of the COVID-19 situation. Prior to the pandemic, sixth form students and a very few pupils with specific needs used their own laptop device. The school engaged with families regarding this issue in July, and has decided not to progress with BYOD beyond those existing groups at present. However, during the autumn term, there will be consideration of models of 1:1 device

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management, which will support learning in a more blended way. The school is currently working with educational professionals at external companies to see how this can be achieved in a cost-effective way, which includes warranty and insurance, while enabling it to secure enough devices for those students who are unable to secure one.

At one **special** school, staff have produced visual resources to help pupils understand the changes to procedures when they return to school. This includes information about where they should keep their belongings and the equipment they need to learn. It explains clearly what they should bring to school and what they should not bring in order to minimise the risk of cross contamination (for example a personal bag, lunch box or reusable water bottle).

Most pupils at a **special** school that provides education for pupils with a range of complex learning needs will be returning with a high level of equipment. Leaders have encouraged parents, carers, escorts and staff to ensure that they wear gloves when transferring equipment such as standers and wheelchairs and that surfaces are regularly cleaned with wipes that are widely available across the school. They are also encouraged to ensure that their hands are well sanitised when transferring equipment from one adult to the next.

Parents, carers and staff will ensure that all equipment for personal use should be well labelled. Care will be taken to wash hands and disinfect equipment. Particular care should be taken during transition of care periods to wash hands and disinfect the

equipment, particularly if it is transferred from home to school, for example wheelchairs. Escort(s) should remain with the pupil near the taxi and transition of pupils should only happen by the taxi and not by the school door. This will limit transmission between adults during a busy period. Parents/carers will be encouraged to use SeeSaw to view and share information and reduce reliance on home to school books at this time.

Nearly all **special** schools are working closely with other agencies to carefully risk assess and plan for the use of resources and return of therapeutic learning such as rebound therapy and hydrotherapy. For pupils with profound physical difficulties, this can be a fundamental aspect of their learning experiences. In one school, pupils have used a picture exchange system to communicate strongly that they wish to use these facilities and do not understand why they cannot access them.

In one all-age multisite **PRU**, the classroom equipment required for learning will be put together in individually-labelled learning packs. Pupils will have their own trays containing the equipment that they may need such as books or pens. Laptops will be available for pupils to use and, where there is a need to share, anti-viral wipes will be used between users. Leaders report that during the 'check-in and catch-up' weeks, pupils learnt these routines very quickly. In addition, equipment and resources have already been reviewed and, where it is not possible to ensure safe use, they have been locked away. Where it will be possible to clean equipment within contact groups, systems are in place to do so.

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### Managing recreational times and comfort breaks

One **primary** school headteacher wants to ensure that pupils from different groups do not mix unnecessarily when the school reopens in September. The school will deploy one member of the support staff as an attendant to monitor the circulation areas, particularly near the toilets and cloakrooms. Staff will be able to speak to each other using hand-held radios to help ensure that pupils can take comfort breaks safely.

Another **primary** school makes use of a bollard system to indicate that the toilets are occupied. Pupils know not to enter when a bollard is placed outside. The area is monitored by a member of staff.

One **primary** school divided its playground up into specific zones during the 'check-in, catch up, prepare' period. It intends to continue this practice in September, and introduce staggered playtimes for pupils. As there are fewer pupils outside at any given time, it has been able to adapt staff responsibilities to ensure that there is ample supervision, while allowing lessons to continue for those who remain indoors.

One **secondary** school is planning to limit the movement of pupils around the school site to minimise contact between groups, including at break and lunch times. Each group will be allocated a specific toilet block to use during the school day and zone for their contact group during recreational periods.

For example:

Bubble	Year group	Designated zone	Designated room(s); Entrance/exit
1	7	E block	E03-E05 (Access via entrance next to E02) E12-E14 (Access via entrance to by students' toilet. Sccess to 1st floor via stairs to history floor)
2	8	A block (2nd floor)	A21-A23; A26-A28 (Access via entrance next to D block. Access to 2nd floor via girls' stairs)
3	9	A block (1st floor)	A11-A16 (Access via main entrance. Access to 1st floor via girls' stairs)
4	10	C block (1st floor)	C02; C10-C12; C18-C19 (Access via sixth form covered area. Access to 1st floor via girls' stairs)
5	11	C block (2nd floor)	C21-C23; C27-C29 (Access via sixth form covered area. Access to 2nd floor via boys' stairs)
6	Sixth form	A block/C block	C01; C13-C17 A01; A03; A05; C24 -C26 Access via sixth form covered area
7	Marion centre	Yellow: (1st floor) M01-M04  Blue (2nd floor) M12; M13, M15	Access via main entrance. Staggered start and finish by transport route

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However, the start and finish time of the school day will remain the same as normal. This is largely owing to the volume of students who attend school via local authority provided / public transport. There will be staggered unstructured times throughout the day for break and brunch/lunch. This includes three welfare breaks throughout the day.

	Reg	Period 1 (8.45-10.45 inclusive of 20 min break)	Period 2 (10.45-12.55 inclusive of 30 min break)	Period 3 (12.55-3.00 inclusive of 25 minute break)
7	8.30	9.45-10.05	11.55-12.25	1.30-1.55
8	8.30	9.25-9.45	11.35-11.55	12.55-1.20
9	8.30	10.25-10.45	12.25-12.55	1.55-2.20
10	8.30	10.05-10.25	11.55-12.25	1.30-1.55
11	8.30	10.25-10.45	12.25-12.55	1.55-2.20
6th	8.30	*6th form student may access bistro until 10.05		*brunch provided to 6th form from 12.55

In one **secondary** school, the morning break will be loosely staggered for all year groups. Learners and staff will be given their usual 15-minute break. Years 7, 8 and 9 will be dismissed from 10.35am. Years 10, 11, 12 and 13 will be dismissed from 10.40am. Class teachers will be observant of other classes being dismissed and will facilitate a timely and orderly release. Class teachers will escort the class out of the building.

Venue	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Yard	10/11	10/11	10/11	10/11	10/11
MUGA	7	7	7	7	7
Astro 1	8	8	8	8	8
Astro 2	9	9	9	9	9
Common Room	12	12	12	12	12
Resource Base etc.	13	13	13	13	13

At one **special** school, play times and breaks are routinely segregated for different classes. This means that, in September, there will be minimal change to the school's current arrangements. Pupils will remain within their classroom bubble and will use the adjacent outdoor area for play and exercise. This will help to limit pupil and staff movement around the school.

At one multi-site **PRU**, during the 'check-in and catch-up' weeks, there was a strong focus on outdoor working, which included pupils completing art projects, gardening and physical activities. Staff and pupils also worked together to submit a bid for grant funding to develop the outside area. The headteacher has confirmed that, for the autumn, effective use of this area will be made for staggered break and lunchtimes, to enable different groups to access the outdoor environment and exercise.

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### Managing lunchtimes / canteen arrangements

One small rural **primary** school has been able to provide hot meals for pupils since the start of the 'check-in, catch up, prepare' period. It will continue to do so during the new routine in September. This involves foundation phase pupils eating in the dinner hall, with key stage 2 pupils eating in their classes. The headteacher explains that flexibility and close co-operation with catering contractors are key to its success.

One single-form-entry **primary** school has adapted the school timetable in order to stagger pupils' lunch breaks over a two-hour period. It has considered the space available in the hall, where pupils eat school meals, along with access to the outdoor spaces. Those pupils who bring their own packed lunch to school will eat in their classrooms. Because of these changes, the tables in the hall can be arranged in a manner that avoids the need to mix contact groups. By arranging the tables in long lines, the school hopes to make it easier to seat pupils efficiently and provide adequate spacing.



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This table shows their plan:

Class	Hall	Inner Courtyard
Nursery and Reception Lunchtime – 11:45pm-1:00pm	11:45AM-12:15PM	12:15pm-1:00pm
	HT & 2 staff (5 TAs lunch)	2 staff on duty (2 staff lunch)
Class	Hall	Outer Yard
Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 Lunchtime – 12:15pm-1:15pm	12:15pm-12:45pm	12:45pm-1:15pm
	3 staff on duty (2 staff lunch)	3 staff on duty (1 staff lunch)
Class	Hall	Outer Yard
Year 4, Year 5, Year 6 Lunchtime – 12:45pm-1:45pm	12:45am -1:15pm	1:15pm-1:45pm
	2 staff on duty (1 staff lunch)	2 staff on duty (1 staff lunch)

Another **primary** school has decided to allocate a specific time slot for eating and a break outdoors for each year group at lunchtime. It has communicated the plan in a new staff handbook that includes the key times during the school day for each year group. The table below shows how it has planned to limit the number of pupils outdoors at any time, and eliminate the mixing of contact groups during their recreational time. In this example, all pupils eat their lunch in their classroom.

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	Gate	Drop off time	Morning break	Lunch (in class)	Lunch break	Afternoon break	Pick up time
<b>Reception</b>	A	9.00	10.15	12.30	12.00	2.00	3.00
<b>Year 1</b>	A	9.10	10.30	12.00	12.30	2.15	3.10
<b>Year 2</b>	A	9.20	10.45	12.30	1.00	2.30	3.20
<b>Year3</b>	B	9.00	10.15	12.30	12.00	2.00	3.00
<b>Year 4</b>	B	9.10	10.30	12.00	12.30	2.15	3.10
<b>Year 5</b>	B	9.20	10.45	12.30	1.00	2.30	3.20
<b>Year 6</b>	B	9.30	11.00	1.00	1.30	2.45	3.30

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One **secondary** school has revised its break and lunchtime arrangements for September. All pupils will have a 15 minute break during period 2 and another, longer break during period 4.

Periods	1	2	3	4	5
	60 mins	75 mins	60 mins	120 mins	55 mins
	8.45-9.45	9.45-11.00	11.00-12.00	12.00-14.00	14.00-14.55
	Lesson	60 min lesson +15 min break	Lesson	80 min lesson + 40 min lunch	Lesson
<b>Year 7</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>A</b>	
<b>Year 8</b>		<b>B</b>		<b>B</b>	
<b>Year 9</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>A</b>	
<b>Year 10</b>		<b>B</b>		<b>B</b>	
<b>Year 11</b>		<b>A</b>		<b>A</b>	

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Lesson 2		Lesson 4	
Years 7 & 8	Break 9.45-10.00	Years 7 & 8	Lunch 12.00-12.40
Years 9 & 10	Break 10.15-10.30	Years 9 & 10	Lunch 12.40-13.20
Year 11	Break 10.45-11.00	Year 11	Lunch 13.20-14.00

At lunchtime, a 'Grab and Go' facility will be available in the canteen. Initially there will also be a limited selection of hot meals prepared and boxed for pupils to pick up, in addition to a range of cold options. This approach will reduce both queuing and contact between pupils and catering staff. The catering service is providing an alternative means of payment, which will obviate the need for the biometric finger scanner to be used. One contact year group at a time will have access to the canteen, for a 20-minute period. Pupils may sit down to eat their lunch, or take it outside to eat, weather permitting, as is the wont of the majority to date.

There will be additional lunchtime staff deployed to the canteen to clean down surfaces before the next contact group enters. Each year group will have a designated area of outside space for break and lunch times.

At one **special** school, lunchtime arrangements will be staggered in order to minimise contact for pupils and staff. There will be three different sittings with tables at a two-metre distance from each other and pupil numbers will be restricted at each sittings. Payments will be cashless and made online.

At one **special** school, all pupils will have lunch in their classrooms in order to minimise physical contact with others. Staff from each class will collect lunch from the kitchen according to a rota in order to ensure that there is limited movement of staff around the building. Break times for each class will be adjusted to limit the number of pupils and staff on the playgrounds at any one time.

One multi-site **PRU** has developed clear guidance for all staff and pupils about catering arrangements. For example, the guidance confirms that packed lunches brought from home must be wiped on arrival and stored in the allocated locations. Pupils must 'ONLY drink your own drink... ONLY eat the food from your own lunch bag' and not 'give anything to anyone else'. Staff and pupils have been guided not to share cutlery and crockery, with pupils required to place used items in a dedicated washbowl, which will be removed by staff and not pupils. All lunches will be eaten in pupils' dedicated contact areas rather than the PRU's canteen to minimise movement.

### Timing and organisation of the school day

As part of the 'check in; catch up; prepare' phase of increased operations, one **secondary** school implemented a three-period day, each consisting of 100 minutes of learning. This was designed to reduce the movement around the site, to limit social mixing between different bubbles and to reduce the number of staff with whom pupils come into contact. The school will continue

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to operate this modified timetable of three extended periods from September. The school has prepared two timetables so that a transfer to the regular six-period timetable may be possible, as and when required. The school will stagger break and lunch times between the different bubbles to ensure that movement and concentration of people are minimised and overcrowding prevented. Pupils will have three welfare breaks throughout the day, including a brunch break. 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.

	Reg	Period 1 (8.45-10.45 inclusive of 20 min break)	Period 2 (10.45-12.55 inclusive of 30 min break)	Period 3 (12.55-3.00 inclusive of 25 minute break)
7	8.30	9.45-10.05	11.55-12.25	1.30-1.55
8	8.30	9.25-9.45	11.35-11.55	12.55-1.20
9	8.30	10.25-10.45	12.25-12.55	1.55-2.20
10	8.30	10.05-10.25	11.55-12.25	1.30-1.55
11	8.30	10.25-10.45	12.25-12.55	1.55-2.20
6th	8.30	*6th form student may access bistro until 10.05		*brunch provided to 6th form from 12.55

In one **special** school, the opening hours will be adjusted as interim measures to support safety of pupils and staff. The school will open to pupils at 8:50 am and close to pupils at 2:30pm. Staff will then use the final hour of the working day to clean, sanitise and prepare the classroom or learning environment for the following day.

One all-age multi-site **PRU** has planned to phase in the provision of lunch over the first two weeks of September. When school lunches resume on 14 September, there will be a limited option of 'grab and go' meals, with both cold and hot options. Lunch will be served as it was previously in small groups in all centres, with only one centre where pupils will have space to eat in a dining hall in line with guidance. If the weather allows, pupils will take their lunches to eat in the outside areas.

At one **PRU**, when all pupils return in September they will follow their standard timetable. Lessons will be offset by five minutes to allow each pupil to safely transition to the next lesson, providing staff time to wipe down tables and chairs with the additional cleaning materials in each class setting in preparation for the next group entering the area.

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## Meeting the needs of learners

### Wellbeing experiences

Each pupil in one rural **primary** school now has a happiness box for them to place messages about how they feel. This promotes a positive approach to self-regulation and reflection, rather than encouraging pupils to talk about their 'news', which is likely to become mundane, reminding everyone how difficult the period of lockdown has been for many pupils. Using small bubbles for teaching, staff have more opportunities to listen to what each pupil has to say. For example, teachers feel they know their pupils better and pupils can share their stories with them, as they have more time to listen to them. This has changed the school's thinking about its approach to teaching. As such, during the first four weeks back in September, each class will have a dedicated half an hour of talk time, with each teacher focusing on a small group of six or seven pupils. During this time, teaching assistants will deliver what the teacher has planned to the rest of the class.

In one **primary** school, the collective act of daily worship will not take place in the hall in order to ensure that groups of pupils do not mix unnecessarily. However, in order to meet pupils' spiritual needs, it has planned a new timetable of class services and assemblies. These include some use of video conferencing facilities so that groups can participate in a service led by the headteacher on their classroom large screen.

One **primary** school headteacher has arranged training for staff on 'restorative' approaches to prepare them and their pupils for returning to school. The content of this specialist training was

adapted to take the current crisis into account. It addresses several aspects, such as using appropriate and consistent terminology, positive reinforcement, and how staff and pupils can support one other at this difficult time. This means that staff became more confident about answering questions from pupils about COVID-19, and they were more aware of strategies to help with the emotional needs of all members of the school community.

On the advice of their local speech and language therapist, staff at one **primary** school have used programmes that promote discussion to assist pupils with specific needs for some years. However, during the 'check-in, catch up, prepare' period, they found that these resources could be adapted to provide valuable activities for all pupils. They will continue with this approach to support pupil wellbeing when the school reopens in September.

In one small, rural **secondary** school for pupils aged 11-16, the headteacher, one teacher and a support assistant have attended a weekly online mental health training course during the lockdown period in association with Swansea University. This is for them to run regular group sessions for all pupils when they return to school in September. These wellbeing sessions will focus on promoting positive mental health by providing strategies to deal with stress and opportunities for relaxation.

One Welsh-medium **secondary** school will open for Year 7, Year 12 and Year 13 only during the first week of September. Trained and experienced inclusion staff, together with staff from outside agencies, will deliver sessions on positive mental health and

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wellbeing to all Year 12 and 13 pupils over the first two days. This will enable the school to identify quickly those pupils who need extra support or monitoring and put in bespoke plans to support them as they return to full-time learning and the demands of the sixth form.

From pupil surveys, one **secondary** school found that most pupils' main source of anxiety was the loss of learning time and falling behind with their studies. It also researched the reactions of pupils from other countries on returning to school and found that, in the main, they wanted to return to learning immediately. The school therefore provided one brief wellbeing activity on returning to school and focused the remainder of the time on subject studies. Support for specific pupils was made available and wellbeing activities were also available online. The school intends to continue with this approach in September.

One **secondary** school uses Microsoft Forms to ascertain pupil opinions and wellbeing within the 'development', 'momentum' and 'fulfilment' phases of reopening. It uses the results of these to tailor the experiences for the pupils.

One Welsh-medium **secondary** school plans to continue its whole-school and year assembly sessions by streaming presentations by pupils and staff. Tutor groups will continue to prepare and present short daily acts of collective worship presentations and share these in the form of video clips to all other classes. This arrangement will include opportunities for individual and groups of pupils to showcase their work and discuss their

learning experiences as part of the school's new Curriculum for Wales delivery. Pupils will be given the opportunity to perform instrumental and vocal pieces to be shared through virtual assemblies, and other pupils with strong creative and physical skills will also be able to share examples of their talents with the rest of the school. Later in the term, leaders will develop this further to create a virtual end of term celebration as it is highly unlikely that the school will be able to hold a Christmas concert or carol service this year.

One bilingual **secondary** school plans to include daily opportunities for physical activity in its timetable for all pupils in September. Daily yoga and circuit sessions during the three-week summer period provided pupils with time outdoors to support pupils' mental, emotional and social wellbeing and positively engaged pupils with their experience of school.



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In one **special** school that caters for many pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, senior leaders have been in discussion with an expert in trauma-informed practice to help prepare staff for pupils' return to school. They recognise that some pupils may need a significant timeframe for their 'healing' after the trauma of the pandemic. This work is helping the school to develop a trauma-informed approach to support all schools in the local authority, not just in its own school.

During the 'check-in and catch-up' period, one **PRU** ensured that all staff and pupils had regular temperature checks throughout the day to help maintain the health and safety of all. Parents and carers were aware of this and the required actions should their child become symptomatic. The headteacher reports that parents and carers are supportive of this precautionary measure. At this PRU, this approach will continue in September, as leaders believe that it provides as safe a learning environment as possible for pupils and staff.

One **PRU** leader has asked staff to look out for behavioural signs, including pupils being fearful, withdrawn, aggressive, oppositional or excessively clingy, to help identify where support may be needed. Where appropriate, the PRU will arrange for the early intervention of specialist staff within the local authority behavioural support service, school counsellors and CAMHS. Where possible, the PRU will also continue to offer support to pupils working from home. The regular phone calls from key workers will enable them to arrange access to other services and signpost pupils and their

parents or carers to other resources to support the wellbeing and best interests of the pupil.

At one all-age **PRU**, service providers including CAMHS, youth workers, the youth intervention service and youth offending service continued to support pupils during the pandemic. None of these service providers visited the PRU site for this work, with all meetings and communications managed using technology. The headteacher believes that, through the effective use of technology, information sharing and the co-ordination of this provision improved using this approach, which it sees as a positive outcome from the situation. The PRU will be building on this platform to provide valuable support for its pupils, both on-site and off-site, in September.

### Supporting vulnerable learners

One secondary school has been working with its attendance officer and the careers adviser to support vulnerable pupils from Year 11 to explore possible future pathways. It has supported these pupils to attend virtual open days.

One secondary school has spent time targeting vulnerable pupils to ensure that their attendance is 100%. These pupils attend in smaller groups and the staff have been carefully chosen to ensure maximum pupil engagement. These staff will continue to work with the vulnerable pupils throughout the summer holidays to ensure a smooth transition in September.

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A parental survey prior to reopening has been used by one **secondary** school to ascertain the level of individual pupil need. This enabled the school to carefully plan for each individual pupil's return, for example through protocols and risk assessments. Vulnerable pupils with behavioural needs were carefully grouped in order to ensure that they received appropriate targeted learning support.

In one small, rural **secondary** school for pupils aged 11-16, leaders have collaborated with the local authority school-based counselling service and the North Wales-wide TRAC service (which supports young people who are disengaged with education) to ensure that support for vulnerable pupils has continued during the lockdown period. They have envisaged that these learners will need significant support in returning to education. Together, they have prepared comprehensive individual plans to support these pupils when they return to school and throughout the autumn term. These plans include 1:1 sessions with support workers, a revised timetable and academic support.

A headteacher from one **special** school confirms that the school will continue to maintain its close liaison with other agencies including social care and other specialist services. This approach will help to ensure a co-ordinated response to meet individual and family needs as the situation develops.

At one special school, staff are aware that pupils with the most challenging behaviour will need additional support when they return to school as these may face the greatest difficulty in

adapting to rules and expectations. The school plans to ensure that they receive additional support in line with their needs and that they have new targets to help them re-engage with learning.

Leaders at one all-age **PRU** anticipate that they will need an even greater focus on wellbeing support for their pupils when they return in September, and plans are in place to do so. For example, they have recently recruited to their support worker team, to ensure that all pupils in key stage 4 and most pupils in key stage 3 have a key worker who can further support pupils' wellbeing needs. These staff will also help to support the PRU's partnership work with other agencies to support wider needs in relation to COVID-19 and transmission. This work also includes addressing issues such as risky behaviours outside of school hours, family-based issues, drug, and criminal related behaviours.

### Supporting learners with complex needs

One **secondary** school will work towards welcoming back as many students within its specialist resource base as can be safely catered for at any one time during the transition period, with a view to as many students as possible returning by 14th of September, based on the individual needs of students. Prioritisation will be based on those students who will be joining the school from another setting, for example primary school, as well as key transition points. As a result, provision may be delivered on a part-time attendance basis during this time so that as many students as possible can

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benefit from attending their familiar setting. To support continuity of learning, the school will work closely with families to ensure that decisions about attendance are informed by existing risk assessments for their children and young people, which should be kept up to date.

Specialist and therapeutic provision at nearly all **special** schools moved online at the start of the pandemic, with medical staff in particular redeployed to local hospitals or other sites. At one special school, these staff have continued to provide support for parents and families by sharing copies of the programmes being followed and, where appropriate, the resources to implement them. For example, the speech and language therapist and occupational therapist have provided digital and physical resources such as sensory story bags, massage kits and social story packs. The school has further supplemented this support through its 'How to...' guides showing parents and carers how to engage with the resources. During the 'check-in and catch-up' period in June and July, these staff have gradually returned to work from the school. Although still based at the local hospital, the school's nurses are providing online training and telephone support for staff to inform their understanding of how to meet new pupils' medical needs when they join the school in September.

At one **special** school, leaders have reviewed the level of risk associated with various procedures previously administered by teaching staff and adjusted responsibilities where they felt this was necessary. For example, pupils in need of specialist support at

lunch time, such as those in need of tube feeding, have previously received this support from school staff. After undertaking multi-disciplinary risk assessments, responsibility for this has now passed to health staff.

At one **special** school, leaders have provided staff with guidance for the use of PPE to enable them to support pupils with a wide range of often complex needs. This guidance identifies when PPE is not required (for example when undertaking routine educational activities in classroom or school settings), and what level of PPE is required when risk assessments identify a risk of splashing to the eye, as well as the level of PPE required when providing intimate care, or when undertaking aerosol generating procedures such as suction. These procedures are in line with the latest guidance from Welsh Government and Public Health Wales.

In one **local authority**, all special schools have received additional guidance to support their reopening. This includes support on risk assessments and behavioural plans for those pupils whose complex needs include challenging behaviours, as well as guidance on appropriate levels of PPE. The guidance details how staff should respond if working with pupils who are likely to spit, including procedures on access to washing facilities to remove bodily fluids, the recommendations for school staff to have changes of clothing available and how to safely store and wash contaminated clothing.

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## Meeting the needs of learners

### Learners needing behavioural support

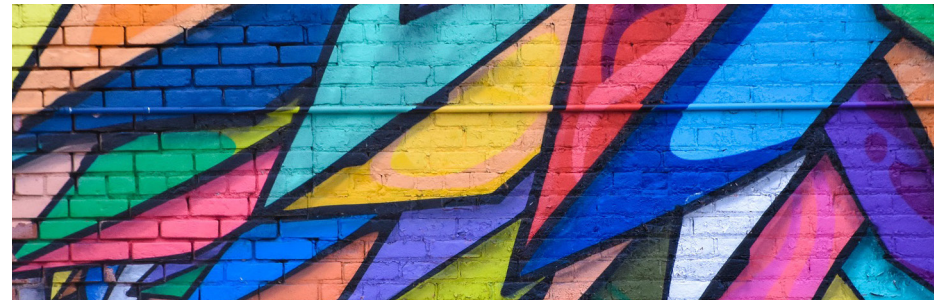
One **primary** school recognises that a very few pupils may find it difficult sitting quietly for a few minutes at the start of the school day while staff prioritise everyone's safe arrival. It has suggested that parents bring those pupils to school towards the end of their allocated ten-minute period. This means that those pupils are not expected to sit and wait patiently for a prolonged period. It has reduced the risk of starting the school day in a negative way and made the morning process more manageable for the pupil, staff and parents.

One **secondary** school has published a revised 'behaviour for learning' policy in light of COVID-19 and in readiness for the new academic year. This includes comprehensive consideration of the impact of the pandemic on children and young people and the ability of staff to manage misbehaviour and/or serious misbehaviour. Leaders have ensured that adequate supervision levels are in place to support teaching staff throughout the day. This includes the allocation of designated pastoral and leadership team members to each zone/year bubble.

At one **special** school, leaders are prioritising the early return of pupils with the most challenging behaviour. This is because these pupils are likely to have the greatest difficulty in adapting to changed rules and expectations. A focus on their engagement and attitudes to learning will feature in the targets in their individual plans.

In one **PRU**, leaders and staff have reviewed all pupil risk assessments for those pupils with known significant behavioural challenges. These pupils now have enhanced risk assessments. As these pupils gradually returned to the setting during the 'check-in and catch-up' weeks, these risk assessments and behaviour plans were discussed with individual pupils. This approach was to encourage their involvement and understanding of the risks and appropriate ways to minimise such risks. Alongside pupil risk assessments, all staff have risk assessments in place. Senior leaders are using these assessments to match staff to appropriate contact groups to minimise health and safety risks. These measures will continue into the autumn term and assessments will be amended to reflect the changing circumstances.

The teacher in charge of one **PRU** has been working with their local authority to produce an addendum to the local authority's behaviour and engagement policy to promote a consistent approach to COVID-19 related behaviours, expectations and the consequences of breaching them. This action took place to ensure greater consistency across the pupil referral service and mainstream schools within the local authority.



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# Curriculum

## Curricular experiences – delivering a broad and balanced curriculum

During the period when schools were closed, teaching assistants at one Welsh-medium **primary** school watched widely available Welsh language television programmes, such as 'Cyw', and took notes for teachers on their content. Teachers then designed activities for pupils around these, so that there was a specific reason for pupils to watch them at home. This was an effective means of encouraging families to engage more with the Welsh-medium media and improve their child's speaking and listening skills when not in school.

In one urban Welsh-medium **primary** school, teachers focused on new approaches to delivering learning during the 'check-in, catch up and prepare' period. As such, they placed around eight activities on an 'activities grid' on Monday mornings, which were also accessible to pupils from home. They taught in class all day then checked the digital learning platform after school, to review what those pupils working at home had done in terms of their tasks, with Friday being their day for preparing for the following week. The focus was primarily on wellbeing activities, followed by literacy and numeracy tasks, and a few cross-curricular activities, where appropriate.

One **primary** school is keen to continue with its preparations for delivering the Curriculum for Wales, despite recent setbacks. As such, it has planned two in-service training days for the beginning of term where staff will complete joint planning based on the

new curriculum principles. One such focus will be the curriculum lead working with key stage 2 teachers to bring foundation phase methodologies into use more widely from Year 3 to Year 6. The school has decided to stop 'setting' pupils by ability for literacy and numeracy from September. Instead, it will place all pupils in mixed ability, whole class groups that focus better on providing them with more holistic and integrated experiences.

In one **primary** school, on days when pupils were engaging in tasks from home, they could 'request' a meeting online with their teacher, once they had attempted them. This worked well where parents were engaged in their children's learning. Leaders are continuing to explore how to develop this approach further so that they are well prepared for another possible phase of learning from home.

One large Welsh-medium **primary** school, with a high proportion of pupils that come from non-Welsh speaking homes, has adapted its curriculum to focus more on pupils' wellbeing and Welsh oracy skills during the limited contact time teachers had with them at the end of the summer term. Teachers focused on providing pupils with as many opportunities as possible to practise their Welsh oracy skills while in school. They planned specific activities for pupils to talk about what they had been doing, and how they felt during their period away from school. Teachers used a strategic plan to revise language patterns with their pupils, and provided them with useful opportunities to use these patterns in their responses.

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On their return to school, teachers at a large **primary** school provided pupils with clear instructions on using Teams as a means of communication. In preparation for September, they formed new team areas for their new classes, and prepared a video clip to introduce themselves to their new cohort of pupils. This went some way to preparing the pupils for their return in September and was a means of introducing them to a more structured form of blended learning in case of another lockdown.

Another **primary** school plans to continue to place an emphasis on digital means of learning in September. It aims to ensure that pupils have the skills to engage in blended or distance learning at short notice should the need arise in the future. It has changed its homework routine so that most homework will be presented digitally. As a result, it hopes that pupils and parents will remain confident in using ICT at home.

One secondary school will continue to develop its blended learning policy over the school year and will aim to provide a range of online resources to assist pupils with any learning deficits into the foreseeable and medium-term future.

One secondary school plans to continue with aspects of blended learning from September onwards. For instance, it plans to use this approach for revision sessions or for engaging groups of pupils such as low attenders or those with long-term illness. It is also considering how it views homework and that a blended learning approach could replace the traditional model of school and home work.

Pupils' literacy skills, and in particular their oracy skills in Welsh and English, have been identified by one bilingual secondary school as a key priority for learning following the COVID-19 period. The school is providing professional learning for staff, including how to teach strategies that target the development of pupils' vocabulary within face-to-face learning and online learning. The school is planning opportunities for pupils to develop their oracy skills across the curriculum.



One small, rural **secondary** school will continue with its plans to start to introduce Curriculum for Wales provision from the start of term to pupils in Year 7 and Year 8. Subject leaders have worked collaboratively during the lockdown period to plan and deliver work across a range of subjects and to ensure a broad

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and balanced curriculum. From September, collaborative work will resume, with lessons grouped by areas of learning and experience and taught in large spaces, such as the library and school hall. This will enable greater flexibility in terms of timetabling and staff rotation.

One bilingual **secondary** school plans to include daily opportunities for physical activity in its timetable for all pupils in September. Daily yoga and circuit sessions during the three-week summer period provided pupils with time outdoors to support pupils' mental, emotional and social wellbeing and positively engaged pupils with their experience of school.

One secondary school is aware that there may be an additional risk of transmission of the virus in some subjects, even when students and staff are able to social distance.

- Music: The department will consider how to minimise the risk, particularly when students are playing instruments or singing in small groups, for example accessing larger spaces to extend social distancing, not sharing musical equipment, especially wind and brass instrument, and ensuring good ventilation. However, singing, wind and brass playing will not be able to take place in larger groups such as choirs and ensembles.
- Design Technology and Science: The department will consider how to revise the curriculum to support learning and progression, while ensuring that there are suitable control measures in place to limit risk. This, in the first instance, is

likely to include a greater emphasis on the research and design phase in technology and/or non-practical elements in science.

- Physical education: The department will need to consider arrangements to ensure that students can be kept in consistent contact groups or bubbles, sports equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups (even within bubbles), and contact sports avoided. Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising distancing between students and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene.

Lesson 5 in one **secondary** school will form part of a blended learning approach to learning. At the start of period 5, pupils will be set a learning task by the teacher, with the in-lesson time dedicated to the clarification and discussion of key concepts, to prepare pupils to undertake the task at home, on Microsoft Teams. This strategy will serve to ensure that learning time is not lost through the staggered start and end times either side of the school day.

One **secondary** school has adapted its key stage 3 and key stage 4 curriculum. Pupils in key stage 4 will access a full curriculum, with core subjects grouped together where possible to minimise movement during a particular phase of the timetable. Pupils will move [within their contact group zone] for option subjects. Staff will move to the relevant room, as required.

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Some pupils in key stage 4 have opted for qualifications that are delivered by the local further education college, as part of the school's 14-19 collaborative arrangements. Pupils are transported by bus, once a week, to the college provision. In the autumn term, pupils will be given a seating plan on the coach [which is large enough to accommodate the relatively small numbers with appropriate social distancing]; if it transpires that they do not adhere to this seating plan, an adult will accompany the pupils on the coach to the college provision and pupils will continue to make their own way home from the college. Pupils can attend this provision if they are not being taught with pupils from other institutions.

In key stage 3, pupils are grouped for learning in teaching groups within three ability bands.



For the autumn term 2020, pupils will be taught as a teaching group class for all their subjects (see timetable below).

	Year 7		Year 8		Year 9	
	Class	Room	Class	Room	Class	Room
<b>Upper band</b>	L	L1	H	A4	E	23
	G	L3	B	12	B	19
	F	L2	P	11	H	20
	E	L4	L	10	C	21
<b>Bridging band</b>	P	L5	F	13	G	22
<b>Middle band</b>	B	3	E	15	P	24
			G	16		
<b>Nurture group</b>	H	4	C	9	L	25
<b>Number of classes</b>	7		8		7	

The above rooming arrangement means that pupils will not need to move around the school during the day, other than when they have PE.

The school continues to work with the local authority to provide sufficient devices for pupils [with the added impetus of BYOD, where required] to be able to engage with the ICT curriculum within their teaching group base, thus obviating the need for movement for this provision.

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Following consultation with middle leaders, and subsequently more widely with teaching staff, the school has taken the decision to 'front load' teaching and learning around the more theoretical aspects [design and planning stages] of the Art and DT (ADT) disciplines at key stage 3 for the autumn term. This serves to avoid challenges such as the sharing of equipment and the additional cleaning implications that may not be sustainable, for example through group work or the close monitoring of pupils by staff in workshops, and cuts out a great deal of corridor movement that would otherwise be required. During the last month of the summer term, ADT staff worked together to adapt the key stage 3 curriculum for the autumn term, incorporating tasks that could be undertaken within the teaching group classroom with some additional resources, such as chinks, crayons, suitable pencils and rulers for design tasks. It is intended then to increase accordingly the quotient of practical work undertaken by pupils in the spring term when, hopefully, the timetable can return to 'normal.'

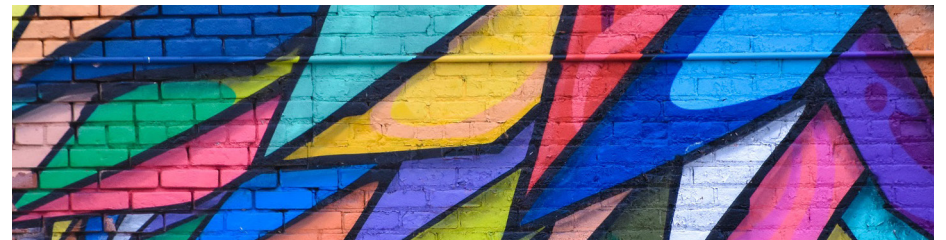
Staff will move from room to room, to deliver the timetable to pupils, to ensure appropriate levels of specialist input are maintained, and to secure continuity of learning and relationships. Hygiene packs in each classroom will allow for appropriate cleaning of teacher workstation as colleagues 'change over'.

An amended schedule for support staff duties will provide pupil supervision within zones as teachers move from classroom to classroom.

In planning for their bilingual delivery, leaders at one bilingual **secondary** school have set the key aim that all pupils will be provided with equity of provision and consistent learning experiences. In planning and developing their curriculum, leaders have thought carefully about contact groups and group teachers who are able to teach though the medium of Welsh primarily with pupils in their Welsh-medium stream. An important part of the planning process has been to ensure that they increase their focus on the development of pupils' Welsh language skills. Many pupils do not speak Welsh at home and therefore leaders have prioritised developing pupils' spoken Welsh during the summer and autumn terms.

In order to provide broad and balanced curriculum, teachers of all subjects will ensure that they focus on developing pupils' Welsh speaking skills more intensely during lessons and contact groups have been created to provide pupils with as many opportunities to practise their Welsh as possible.

Leaders have planned their English and Welsh provision simultaneously. This will enable them to provide equitable learning opportunities and respond to pupils' and staff needs in both mediums appropriately.



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Since reopening in June, pupils in one **special** school have been keen to resume their previous learning activities and tasks. Therefore, in September the school will continue with the curriculum as it was planned pre-COVID-19. However, in addition, there will be a particularly strong focus on outside learning experiences. Staff know the pupils extremely well, have a strong understanding of trauma-informed practice and are prepared to address any issues experienced by any pupils during the pandemic as they arise.

In one **PRU** for secondary age pupils, leaders note that many pupils had little engagement with the distance learning resources provided during this time. In contrast, wellbeing calls and support were strong and welcomed by pupils, parents, and carers. As a result, leaders have worked together with staff to revise the curriculum to re-engage pupils immediately on their return in September. A key emphasis will be on routines and structures to support pupils' transition back into full-time learning. Alongside this approach, pupil wellbeing will also be a key focus, with pupils having opportunities to access the PRU's learning recovery areas and one-to-one support for their wellbeing. This support centres on the professional learning that all staff received during the pandemic about trauma-informed approaches. The PRU has become a 'trauma-informed school', and leaders believe that this approach will be critical alongside the curriculum delivery for returning pupils.

## Establishing pupils' current academic progress

One **secondary** school is helping teachers to plan for the resumption of the curriculum and for the acceleration of the learning of their pupils. It has simplified and defined possible approaches that are flexible and can be adapted according to the pupils' age and ability. For example, it has produced an eight point plan designed to ascertain the learning that has taken place and how secure it is, ways in which to assess an individual's baseline, route maps for the blending of revision and new learning, and methods to enhance engagement and prepare pupils for their next stages of learning. The eight point plan poses pertinent questions for teachers to consider and suggests methods and techniques, including the use of ICT, to best address the points under consideration. In addition, the school has clarified the most appropriate range of approaches that could be employed when supporting pupils with gaps in their learning by mapping attainment against engagement in a helpful quadrant.

## Transition

One primary school will welcome back all learners to its on-site specialist resource base using a staggered approach leading up to a full intake by 14th September. The needs of each individual learner will be assessed to provide appropriate support through personal ALN risk assessments.

To support continuity of learning, staff will work collaboratively with the schools where the pupils are registered, to ensure that

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they can begin their transition safely and have a consistent approach across sites. Each pupil will attend four days at the specialist resource base and one day at their registered school throughout the autumn term. This will enable support staff to be better equipped and confident to work across the sites. Staff will be supporting the schools directly to implement individualised support plans and enable pupils to access learning in a positive environment.

One **secondary** school has invited the parents of Year 7 pupils to attend school with their child for part of their first day. Pupils will be grouped with their peers from their former primary school together with parents or carers. The school has organised specific sessions to help pupils settle quickly and to establish positive relationships with parents and carers. As part of the welcome package, the school plans to conduct site tours and run small group discussion sessions, as well as running 'getting to know you' activities during the day.

One **secondary** school ran a virtual transition programme for Year 6 pupils including video presentations from key members of staff on wellbeing and learning and opportunities for parents to ask questions through transition webinars. Equipment and materials were delivered to pupils' homes to facilitate activities and lessons. For example, pupils completed and filmed a science activity around pH testing using a red cabbage. In September, these pupils will be given priority and will have days in school with no or few other pupils present to familiarise themselves with the school.

One **secondary** school has provided AS work for Year 11 pupils who intend to return to the sixth form and an opportunity for these pupils to attend school for an induction session during the 'catch up' period, and again in September.

In order to support the Years 7 and 12 pupils with transition, one **secondary** school has held virtual meetings with pupils and parents where leaders have explained their approaches for September and supported pupils to know what to expect of their new learning environment and experiences. These meetings have been well attended and parents have provided positive feedback. In addition, to make up for the transition time lost during the summer term, the Thursday and Friday of the first week back are dedicated to Year 7 and Year 12. This will enable teachers to engage with these pupils in a focused way and will enable Year 7 pupils to get to know their new school without large numbers of pupils in attendance.

Parents of new starters to the reception class in one **special** school were able to visit the school during the pandemic. This was particularly helpful in planning for the pupils' placement during the phased entry. The school has arranged a transition day to support pupils moving from key stage 2 to key stage 3. The school plans to re-introduce pupils in stages over the first two weeks of the autumn term to enable pupils at key transition points to familiarise themselves with their new teachers, classmates and classrooms before all pupils return.

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Leaders at one **special** school that provides education for pupils with a range of complex learning needs have planned a detailed timetable of events for the first weekdays of the term. The first two days, 1 and 2 September, will be utilised to provide staff with:

- up-to-date guidance and support for reopening
- updates on pupil welfare and wellbeing
- mandatory training – health, medical safeguarding and interventions
- familiarisation with site changes and routines

On 3 and 4 September, parents/carers of children with complex medical and health needs will be invited into school to meet with their head of phase, class teacher, support team, school nurse and school health co-ordinator for around an hour.

The purpose of this visit will be to:

- build parental confidence
- familiarise with arrival, class, break, lunch and departure routines
- update the school team on progress, developments and any current health concerns
- finalise the risk assessments, health plans and medical forms, ensuring that any medications are signed in appropriately by the school health co-ordinator
- discuss and agree action plans to address concerns/fears
- agree an individual back to school plan with parents/carers,

which may include a phased return to build up strength, confidence and resilience

This period has also been designated as transition days for the new pupils. On these days:

- families can bring their children in and meet the teaching and support staff
- families can meet the kitchen staff to discuss meal plans if needed
- care plans and individual risk assessments can be completed with families
- all families will receive a personal seesaw password to enable them to interact with the teachers and support staff, and will receive updates on their child's day at school



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Leaders at one multi-site **PRU** have allocated two days for staff planning at the start of September, followed by two days of phased reopening on all sites. These days will provide for the new Year 10 to confirm option choices and for Year 11 to 'check-in and catch-up'. The 2019-2020 Year 11 pupils will also be offered the opportunity to meet with staff and learning mentors to discuss their next steps, where appropriate. New pupils will start their induction programme for the first two weeks, which includes assessments, programme planning and target setting. Three new pupils joined the PRU during this period, and a further six are planned for September. All of these placements were through the local authority panel.



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# Communication

## Communicating with home and supporting parents

In one cluster of schools, headteachers have co-operated closely with each other to ensure that their plans for reopening are as similar as possible. This includes cross-sector working. Schools send information for parents on 'cluster' headed paper so that all schools speak with the same voice.

One **primary** school is preparing its staff in using effective blended learning ahead of more possible localised lockdowns in the future, based on the lessons they have learned about distance learning and low engagement among a minority of learners. As a result, leaders have set out expectations for staff on distance learning, based around 'expectations for teachers', 'expectations for pupils' and 'expectations for parents'. Leaders were clear that learning intentions were not to be lowered and consulted stakeholders about what the school needed from pupils and parents and, in turn, what they needed from the school, in order to progress when they may be unable to attend for extended periods.

One **primary** school asks pupils to record themselves reading in Welsh and English on a daily basis and post the clips to their online learning account. This approach ensures that reading continues to have a high status when the school is closed. Knowing that a teacher wants to hear them read may help to transfer accountability and help to alleviate pressure on parents. The platform this school uses allows staff to respond to the video clips with feedback or encouragement.

One **primary** school attributed its high levels of pupil engagement to the support it had given families in the early days of the COVID-19 measures. The school let ICT equipment to families who did not have any or where there was excessive demand on resources at home. However, the school quickly realised that the lack of resource was not the only barrier. A minority of parents lacked suitable ICT skills to be able to support their children at home. This ranged from the setting up of equipment to accessing platforms for home learning. To reduce this aspect of digital deprivation, the school set up a 'technical helpdesk'. Staff at the school were able to operate this service and it was very busy for the first two weeks, until families became confident in using their new equipment or accessing platforms.

A home school agreement for the COVID-19 period has been used by one **secondary** school to communicate expectations around the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community. The agreement includes information about social distancing, hygiene and behaviour.

One **secondary** school is exploring which of those processes it has put in place due to the lockdown have been so beneficial that they can be kept for the future. For example, it is reviewing its systems for interacting with parents. It is considering online alternatives to the traditional parents' evening and is looking at alternative ways of communicating with parents and gathering their views. It also plans to allocate one hour a week of directed time to continue with weekly phone calls to parents as these

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have had such a positive impact on how parents interact with the school. In addition, all phone calls will now be 'triaged' via the wellbeing team instead of the receptionist in order to give parents instant reassurance and ensure that any issues are being dealt with by the right person.

One Welsh-medium **secondary** school has published a blog in the form of frequently asked questions and answers regarding day-to-day procedures. This school will continue to use this facility to share updates with parents during the autumn term.

Parents/carers will not be permitted to drive on to the premises of one **secondary** school to drop off and/or collect pupils. Parents will not be able to enter the premises without a prior arranged appointment. The school has published 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. Its Head of School 'open door' appointments will continue each month but these will be conducted virtually.

One **secondary** school has published a list of school specific frequently asked questions for parents on its website.

The headteacher at one **special** school maintains that communication with pupils, parents and carers is key in ensuring wellbeing and alleviating everyone's anxieties when pupils return.

In readiness for reopening, the school has produced several resources such as an end of year letter to parents and carers, which includes guidance on returning to school in September. It has also prepared videos for pupils with different purposes such as transition and what the school looks like now, as well as social stories differentiated to different levels of understanding. These resources are shared on the school's website and online platforms. The school has also been meeting with individual parents and carers in order to reassure and discuss individualised plans for their children.

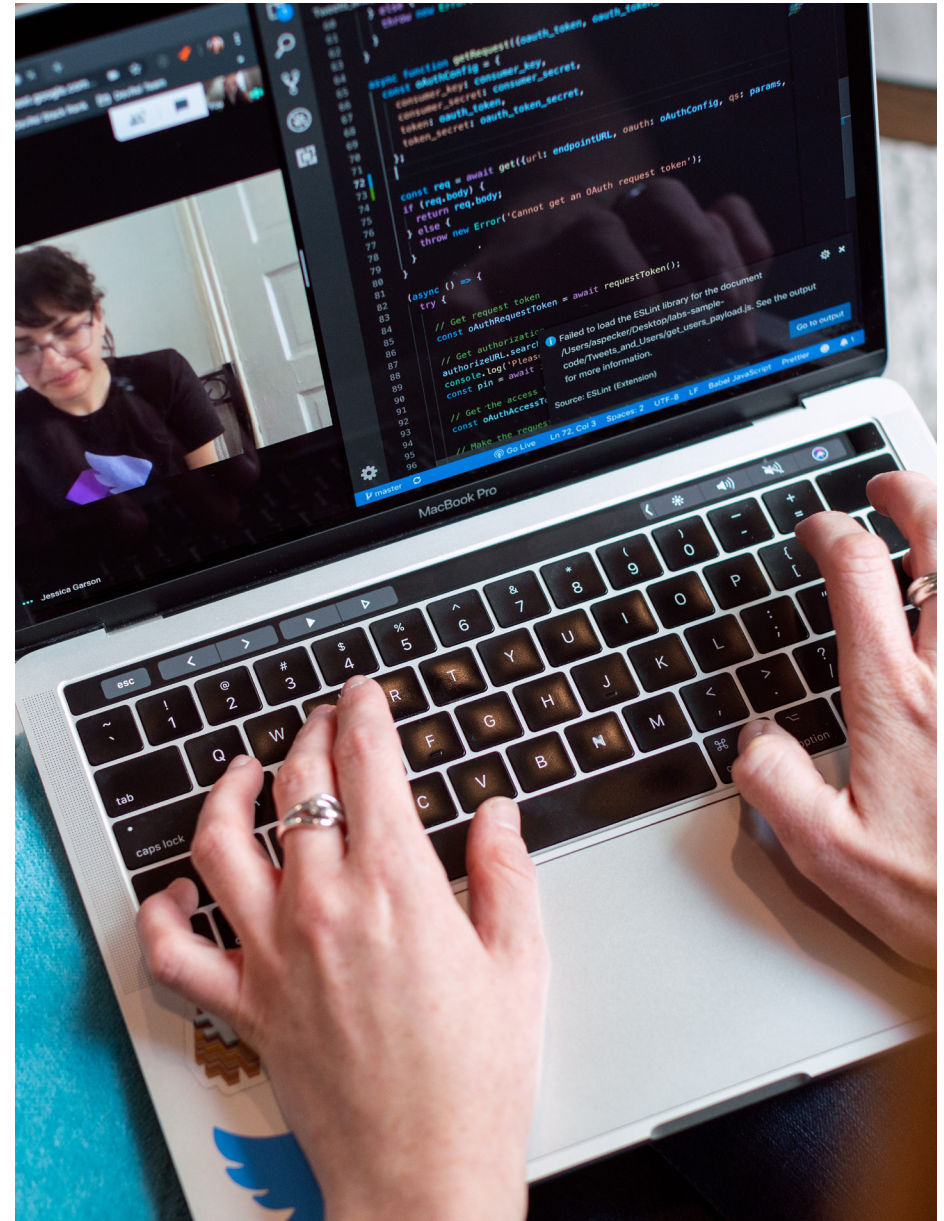


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One **PRU** supported parents to manage their child's behaviour at home, providing ongoing rewards and positive engagement calls to pupils, and signposting parents to other agency support where necessary. As a result, family support is high and has contributed positively to the successful return of pupils to the PRU during the 'check-in' period. Working with families, staff at the PRU have shared all the safety measures and changes to routines for pupils whilst they were on site. The headteacher reports that nearly all families are reinforcing these messages with their child. The PRU plans to build on these improved relationships and increased parental involvement in the autumn term. Twice-weekly minibus visits around the catchment area have enabled one special school to keep in close contact with pupils and their parents throughout the pandemic. Staff have delivered individual learning resources such as communication aids, digital resources and mobility aids. This arrangement, which has been very popular with pupils and their families, allows staff the additional opportunities to make wellbeing checks on pupils and, where needed, to provide advice and guidance to support parents, albeit at a suitable social distance.



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## Staff

### Supporting staff and headteacher wellbeing

One Welsh-medium **secondary** school has planned how it can promote the feeling of community amongst its staff to mitigate against the fact that staff spend less time together because of social distancing guidelines. The school has established an initiative where all staff receive a regular telephone call from a colleague to chat and socialise. The school has formal briefing meetings using Microsoft Teams and informal quizzes, baking challenges and recreating a piece of art competitions for all members of staff to build morale.

Despite apprehension about the return of all pupils in September, staff in one **special** school have been very supportive of the arrangements the school has made to ensure their safety and wellbeing during the phased return to school. All staff have had the opportunity to respond and provide feedback on risk assessments for the new working practices, and to shape these for their own working areas in line with overarching principles. Senior leaders have ensured that regular online team meetings and whole staff meetings include opportunities for staff to provide feedback at each stage. They have endeavoured to manage the flow of information and guidance to staff to ensure there is a balance between keeping staff informed and ensuring they are not overwhelmed. Staff also have access to a school counsellor and informally to the school's educational psychologist.

Before opening, leaders at one **PRU** were aware of a few staff anxieties and therefore held back on raising issues related to PPE, preferring to deal with this face-to-face with small groups of staff during the 'check-in and catch-up' period. When staff returned on site, the headteacher went around each staff group and gave a demonstration of PPE procedures, the arrangements, and expectations for this. Several staff worked together to make sling-bags and aprons so that each member of staff could place their PPE equipment such as sanitiser, visor and so forth into it, with no need to touch anybody else's. The headteacher believes that modelling the equipment and explaining the procedures face-to-face, with resources that staff had developed themselves, brought both the 'humour and human perspective' together well to address issues successfully. This approach will contribute positively to the return of all pupils in September.

**PRU** leaders in one local authority feel that the support and guidance from local authority officers have been highly effective in supporting their wellbeing. For example, daily contact was established between the local authority officers and PRU leaders, which as time progressed reduced to a few times a week. A social media app was used by officers with the PRU and special school leaders providing communication and the sharing of information and ideas. The improved communication processes between the local authority and leaders will continue in September. Leaders report that it has greatly improved the working relationships between professionals.

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### Professional learning

One **primary** school headteacher has formed this list of lessons learned and thoughts to move forward as a result of closing their school during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Ensuring that staff engage in creating more asynchronous learning materials so pupils have resources they can use to model and reuse, such as videos that model skills and knowledge that can be played, paused and rewound at a pace suitable for them.
- Spending more time on developing the IT skills of staff, and improving their understanding of the type of technology best suited for enhancing and supporting pupils' learning.
- Thinking carefully about how pupils can be engaged safely in collaborative learning at home. While most pupils have engaged with home learning activities and there have been good opportunities for them to interact with school staff, there has been less opportunity for them to work and support each other.
- Thoughts have moved to the purpose of school and those aspects that should be important. Is this an opportunity to discard the unnecessary and concentrate on those things that really matter for pupils? Should more time be spent on developing strong pedagogy and 'depth' of learning, rather than overloading staff with curriculum content and initiatives?

One **secondary** school has reviewed and evaluated its approach to distance and blended learning. Leaders at the school feel that the biggest impact of a blended learning approach has been the intense focus on pedagogy, of identifying the essentials of intended learning and being more precise about teaching strategies. They feel that, in the future, teachers will draw beneficially on their blended learning experiences to supplement classroom practice, for example as webinars to support lessons, revision sessions or extra-curricular support. On reviewing their use of Google Classroom, leaders found that communication with pupils needs to be managed more effectively. Pupils were finding the large number of emails and notifications daunting, especially on a Monday morning. The school is looking at ways to help staff to simplify the messaging and to ensure that the information is not too cluttered and confusing. The school is working on standard operating procedures for Google Classroom to be put in place for September.

One bilingual **secondary** school has implemented a comprehensive plan to provide a bespoke training and support package to all teachers to enable them to deliver high quality lessons, presentations and live sessions using digital apps and platforms during the period of school closure. All staff have received new digital equipment to support them in their preparation and teaching, such as visualisers. The school's digital leader, with the support of the local authority, provides advanced professional learning sessions in digital skills. Many teachers attend voluntarily

## Staff

and are enthusiastic about driving forward new ways of delivery. Gaining new skills and applying them to their practice has resulted in a substantial increase in staff confidence and morale. This is because learner engagement has been significantly high. The school plans to continue to use these methods and maintain a blended learning approach when the school reopens fully. This will enable teachers to support both pupil wellbeing and learning during lessons and build on pupils' well-established independent learning skills by setting work for completion outside of school hours.

One **secondary** school has provided staff with a menu of online courses and reading materials that they have been encouraged to engage with. Staff are asked to note the professional learning activities they have undertaken in a simple log. This gives the school an overview of formal and informal professional learning going on in the school. Activities staff have undertaken include bereavement training, training on digital platforms such as Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams, reading information from organisations such as EEF or ResearchEd, taking part in education webinars, training courses on topics such as the new curriculum or ACEs and so on. The school plans to continue with this combination of more personalised informal and formal professional development and take advantage of virtual training packages in the new term.

One **secondary** has provided training sessions to support staff in its preparation and delivery of asynchronous and synchronous distance learning. Leaders have established clear expectations of

staff around the delivery of these forms of education and also the implications for their own safeguarding.

While working from home, staff from one **special** school has completed accredited modules of online professional learning in readiness for the return to school in September. These include learning about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), behaviour management approaches, rebound therapy, Makaton, first aid and supporting pupils' mental health issues. Staff have also used this time to produce resources such as pre-literacy activities. The two staff training days in September will address wellbeing issues, as well as themes such as Team Teach, rebound therapy and swimming pool health and safety.



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During the pandemic, leaders at one **PRU** engaged all staff in professional learning opportunities as part of their approach for keeping staff in touch and focused together. A key focus for professional learning was trauma-informed approaches for all staff for the PRU to become a trauma-informed school. This issue was identified as an important area for improvement prior to the pandemic. Leaders have used this time to engage all staff in this training in readiness for pupils returning to full-time education. During this time, PRU staff also had the opportunity to work in another primary PRU hub in the local authority. This experience provided staff with the opportunity to upskill and share practices with colleagues in this provision. The headteacher believes this experience has been a positive outcome for staff from both settings and has significantly strengthened the working relationship between them. This collaboration will continue in September.

### Partnerships

One **secondary** school has published a comprehensive risk assessment and shared it widely with stakeholders, staff and external service providers such as taxi and bus companies. There are clear and agreed guidelines and procedures when pupil is symptomatic and suspected of having COVID-19. These guidelines include details of levels of PPE for staff who have come into contact with those pupils, procedures for the safe isolation of learners whilst waiting for parents to collect them, and a comprehensive decontamination plan for cleaners.

In order to minimise movement between schools, a few secondary schools who are in partnership arrangements to deliver sixth form lessons plan to live stream the lessons delivered from the school where they are taught to the home schools of pupils.

Sixth form lessons offered through partnership working within one local authority have moved online using Microsoft Teams to live stream lessons. Pupils join their online class from their home school or from their own home.

At one **special** school that provides education for pupils with a range of complex learning needs, leaders will ensure that all visitors must be pre-authorised by the headteacher or deputy headteacher. The service must be considered essential and cannot be delivered using any other method, for example via virtual meetings.

All visitors must sign in and administrative staff will ensure that they are made aware that their details may be shared with the track and trace service. The only circumstance that this may be overridden would be due to child protection investigation and/or police investigation. In these cases, the head / deputy headteacher should be alerted immediately and will meet with them in the main reception. Once a service has been approved, a member of the senior leadership team will meet with service providers during their initial visit to brief on safety measures and safeguarding, and update on school information. Visitors will not be permitted to visit further than main reception until this briefing is complete.

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In one **local authority**, service providers including CAMHS, youth workers, youth intervention service, and youth offending service and therapeutic services have continued to support pupils attending their **PRUs** and special schools during the pandemic. No service providers have visited the sites for this work during the pandemic, with all meetings and communications managed using technology. Leaders believe that, through effective use of technology, information sharing and co-ordination of this provision have improved using this approach, which is a positive outcome from the situation. Families are supportive and appreciate of the staff and the level of support available for their children. This approach of 'team around the PRU/school' will continue in the autumn term.

The headteacher of one **PRU** has been involved with their regional consortium during this period. In particular, they have worked with lead officers to enable staff within the PRU to deliver mindfulness for schools and staff across the region. Online training materials have been prepared and these are being rolled out across all schools, which will continue into the autumn term. The headteacher regards this development as a positive improvement in working relationships between the PRU and mainstream staff. Mainstream school leaders recognise the increased need for professional development in this area to support pupils returning to school in September.

### Management of partial closure

In anticipation of any future escalation in COVID-19 cases, one **secondary** school has structured three different plans to respond to a potential requirement for further social distancing measures. Plans for running the school with limited, increased and maximum restrictions for all pupils include revised measures for curriculum, teaching, pupil movement, catering and blended/distance learning.

One **secondary** school has trained all teachers in the use of technology to live stream lessons during the summer term. In early September, all pupils will receive face-to-face lessons on how to use digital platforms and applications including Google Meet to facilitate live lessons should the school have to close partially or fully during the autumn term.

When one **special** school initially moved to distance learning for most of its pupils at the start of the pandemic, it became clear that many pupils were unable to engage effectively with online learning, either because of a lack of ICT skills in the family, or because families lacked the skills to support their child's learning online. The school therefore plans to spend time in September familiarising pupils and families with how to access and engage with the online resources available to them such as those on Hwb. This investment of time early in the school year should prepare families well for any subsequent return to distance learning caused by a full or partial closure caused by a potential future 'local lockdown'.

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## Thank you

We would like to thank the following for their significant contribution to this work. More information about individual school arrangements can be found on the links below:

- [Eirias High School](#)
- [The Bishop of Llandaff CiW High School](#)
- Coedcae School
- [St Marys School Blaenau Gwent](#)
- Llanfaes Primary School
- Ysgol Ffordd Dyffryn
- St Christopher's Special School
- Brynnau primary School
- Fitzalan High School
- Llanwern High School
- Ysgol Uwchradd Bodedern
- Ysgol Dyffryn Aman
- Meadow Lane Primary School
- Pentrepoeth Primary School
- Rogerstone Primary School

- Trellech Primary School
- Jubilee Park Primary School
- Cathays High School
- Denbighshire PRU
- Ty Gwyn Special School
- Portfield Special School
- Ysgol Bro Myrddin
- Ysgol Godre'r Berwyn
- Nant y Parc Primary School
- Ysgol Uwchradd Aberteifi

In addition, we would like to thank the schools that participated in our programme of engagement calls during the summer term 2020. Information from these calls has also been used.

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