

Ruthin School

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Established 1284

Headmaster: Mr P Wallace-Woodroffe BA (Ed) Exon

21st August 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I do hope you have had a really good break this summer, after a very intensive term for the pupils with the unusual online learning experience. We are looking forward to welcoming the pupils back to school for the new year. During the summer we have been working hard to make sure that when everyone returns to site in September, we have an efficient, safe and positive environment for us to start the new academic year. The school has conducted a thorough risk assessment for the return to school (the results of which will be published on the website) and this detailed email provides an update on what has been going on, some guidance about how the school will operate in September, and some actions for all members of the community to take.

Site safety

Keeping the school clean and safe is our top priority. We are achieving this in a number of different ways:

- Deep cleaning by our cleaning staff, and regular cleaning throughout the day of the main touch points.
- Hand sanitiser stations at regular spacing and building entry points, and strong encouragement (to pupils) to wash hands thoroughly/regularly.
- Fogging of the main school areas on a monthly basis with a product called [Zoono](#) - which creates an anti-microbial, mono-molecular layer and which destroys viruses and bacteria for up to 30 days (used on public trains, the National Health Service, as well as other schools).
- All boarding houses and bedrooms will be cleaned on a daily basis to ensure continued hygienic conditions.
- Natural ventilation with open doors and windows wherever possible/practical.
- Acrylic screens in each classroom, to separate the member of teaching staff from the rest of the classroom.
- Clear instructions to all staff, Pupils and other visitors to site that they must not come to the school if they have any symptoms (see below).
- All staff and pupils supported with respiratory hygiene - the *catch it, bin it, kill it* approach - with tissues available in classrooms, and bins that are regularly emptied.

Other protective measures

Guidance for the reopening of schools in the UK does not encourage the use of face masks on site, though they are mandatory for staff and pupils using public transport (and this may of course change to other areas such as shops, as is the case in other parts off the UK). On site we are clear that this is a matter of personal preference for staff and pupils, and will support any member of staff or pupil who chooses to wear a face mask when we return.

In accordance with UK and Welsh Government guidance pupils will be kept in bubbles related to their age group or boarding house and they must remain within their bubbles during the school day, and will be encouraged to maintain sensible distance from one another. Staff must try to maintain the social distancing (from pupils and from other staff) that has become normal for us all - at least 1m+ and where possible, 2m+. In a classroom setting, the acrylic screens will allow closer 1:1 conversations with pupils to take place while minimising risk.

Classrooms should be set up with seating plans to reflect social distancing requirements - with pupils sat side by side rather than facing one another wherever possible, and removing any unnecessary furniture. Wherever possible one way systems with appropriate signage will operate to reduce potential contact.

Pupils must not share resources, and should always bring their own equipment. There will be regular encouragement and reminders. Any resources that must be shared, such as pianos and science equipment, will be subject to rigorous cleaning or quarantining protocols.

Sports and other activities will be carried out using the latest government guidelines, ensuring social distancing wherever possible.

Absence/attendance

Illness – anyone with a confirmed Covid-19 diagnosis must remain away from school or in isolation in school (boarders) for at least 10 days (or higher if varied by the government), whether or not they feel unwell.

Symptoms – any one of the following symptoms signifies that a pupil may have Covid-19 and (a) must not attend school and (b) the school (in case of boarders, or parents must arrange a test without delay:

- high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Tests can be booked at <https://gov.wales/apply-coronavirus-covid-19-test>, usually on the same day, No-one with any of the three symptoms should return to school until they have received a negative test result, or have completed the required period away from work following a positive test.



[Apply for a coronavirus \(COVID-19\) test | GOV.WALES](#)

Apply for a test online (on NHS). You can apply for a test for yourself or someone in your household with symptoms. This includes adults and children, and following the recent announcement now also includes the under 5s.

gov.wales

Isolation – where anyone in a household has Covid-19 symptoms, the household must isolate immediately and organise a test for that household member as soon as possible. If they receive a negative test result you may return to school.

The NHS test and trace service works to identify people who have been in close, recent contact with anyone diagnosed with Covid-19. Anyone who is contacted by the service must isolate for the period required, and must not come to school for 14 days from the point of contact. Most pupils will be able to study from home or their room if they need to isolate, unless they become unwell.

Some pupils are returning to school to be quarantined from 28th August and separate arrangements are being made for them. Whilst in quarantine they will of course receive meals and support from the boarding staff.

School – where a member of staff or a pupil develops symptoms during the school day, they should immediately follow the designated process to isolate themselves and to trigger communication to anyone they have been in close contact with. This process will be led by the school nurse team. The school will work with NHS test and trace and the local health protection team to co-ordinate matters. Close contact means:

- Direct close contacts - face to face contact for any length of time, within 1 metre, including being coughed on, a face to face conversation, or physical contact (skin to skin).
- Proximity contacts - extended close contact (within 1-2m for more than 15 minutes).
- Travelling in a small vehicle, like a car.

Names of pupils or members of staff with a confirmed diagnosis will not be shared unless it is essential to protect others.

Underlying health conditions – If a pupil has an underlying health condition (or other risk factors) that make the virus a particular concern, please email schoolnurse@ruthinschool.co.uk directly so that we can organise an individual risk assessment. This may involve advice from your child's doctor or the school's medical advisers.

Trips and visits

Following current government guidance, no overnight trips or visits can take place this term or until such time as the guidance changes. The position for day trips is slightly more flexible, but the

school will need to carry out a detailed risk assessment ensuring that Covid-19 risks are identified and managed, for any trip that we want to go ahead.

Concerns and alerts

We expect all staff and pupils to adapt to the new rules that we have to put in place this term, but also recognise that this will be a learning process for us all - and that we may need to adapt things as we go. This may include changes to the timing of the school day. Our focus for everyone will be on consistent reminders and encouragement, particularly for pupils who are new to the school or who may be struggling with the changes in their day to day lives. Persistent non-compliance (particularly if that is deliberate) may need to be dealt with using the usual school policies/sanctions, if there are concerns. Any parent who wishes to raise a concern (or suggestion) about the way that we are managing this term can email me directly, and this will be monitored and dealt with.

Finally, please do make sure that your contact information held at the school is updated, particularly if this has changed at all in the last six months. We will be sending a form asking all staff and parents to detail if anyone they have had contact with has had a positive test.

I hope that this detailed information helps you in preparing for the term ahead, and we will keep you updated if things change further in light of new guidance. If there's anything I've missed or if you have any suggestions or concerns that it would help to talk through, please do get in touch directly.

With best wishes,

Nicholas Grenfell-Marten
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