



# Radyr Comprehensive School

**Ysgol Gyfun Radur**

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Dear Parent/Carer

I hope that you and your families are well and are coping with the extremely challenging situation in which we all find ourselves. As we enter the half-term break, we are still living in a state of concern and uncertainty.

Attached you will find the latest policy position of Welsh Government in respect of its processes and procedures regarding the re-opening (or, maybe, reconstituting) of schools. Whilst there remains uncertainty around the precise timescales for a graduated return, the framework sets out some clear principles. It also makes a key and ongoing commitment to engage with all stakeholders in every aspect of this planning.

I wanted to reassure our families that the school is fully engaged with the local authority on the complex process of planning for the re-opening of schools in Cardiff. This includes very specific and detailed planning for every aspect of school life from school transport, social distancing, procurement and use of PPE, transition years, additional learning needs provision, cleaning, catering, priority cohorts and student groups for a graduated re-opening, curriculum, timetabling and more.

We are currently planning for strict one-way systems around the school and around each block. We are planning for safe social distancing in each classroom, reassigning spaces such as the gym, sports hall and main hall as teaching spaces with exam desks laid out according to social distancing. We are also considering how a 'blended' timetable, where students have a mixture of classroom teaching and home learning can be instigated.

All these things are possible, and we will keep working through every aspect of health, safety and educational continuity. Two Cardiff Secondary Headteachers are representing our sector in the Welsh Government strategy group. Part of their remit is to interrogate the planning that has been put in place in England and in other countries in Europe. The group of 21 Cardiff secondary Headteachers meet, in a virtual capacity, on a weekly basis to ensure that we move forwards with a consistent approach.

I am sure you are aware that the Education Minister has set out five guiding principles which will determine when and how schools will return to providing education for most school pupils:

1. The safety and mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of students and staff
2. Continuing contribution to the national effort and strategy to fight the spread of COVID19
3. Having the confidence of parents, staff and students – based on evidence and information – so that they can plan ahead
4. Ability to prioritise learners at key points, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds
5. Consistency with the Welsh Government's framework for decision making, to have guidance in place to support measures such as distancing, managing attendance and wider protective actions.

Equally, the First Minister has referred to the aim of seeing some learners (vulnerable students and exam year groups) returning prior to the summer holidays. Even if we do return in some capacity before the summer holidays, there will still be large numbers of our students that we will not have face to face contact with before the autumn at the earliest.

It is therefore important that we continue to take care with the educational continuity that we provide for our young people whilst they are at home. We need to continue to be clear that home school is very different from school. Our teaching staff are only too aware of the challenge of delivering new and potentially complex content, particularly at GCSE and AS/A level. However, as time progresses, we will have no choice but to consider how best to cover course content and theory as well as consolidating what has already been taught.

With the coming months in mind, it is important that students engage with their teachers in tasks that are both accessible for our students at home, and also gives teachers the ability to provide feedback on the progress they are making.

We are currently tracking engagement in two different ways. Firstly, the pastoral tutor teams are tracking the engagement of students. We are also gathering a picture of engagement across the curriculum subjects in order to identify and address any issues that families may be experiencing. An example of this is the challenge of accessing work that is set on a digital platform.

I would like to give one firm reassurance to parents. Any tasks that are set to monitor students and gauge progress will not be used for any purpose other than monitoring the engagement levels of students and helping them to progress in their learning. They will not impact on any formal grades or any setting arrangements for next year. We also commit to take any actions that we can to support our learners with additional learning needs (ALN). Our ALN students will continue to receive support and differentiated materials from the ALN team.

I also need to reiterate that home learning is not intended to cause additional stress to any student or their family. It is, however, intended to keep brains ticking and developing. We all need a structure that includes some school work each week day. We also need exercise/activity/fresh air and wellbeing in balance.

Towards the end of next week, we will be issuing year group timetables to years 7, 8, 9 and 10 for delivery in the final half-term. Year 8 will be allowed to follow their GCSE option choices as well as their core subjects. Year 10 will work on their Welsh Baccalaureate in the first week back and then

adopt their new timetables in the second week. These year group timetables will be issued towards the end of the Whitsun break.

In the weeks immediately following half-term we will be issuing WJEC – and other boards where appropriate – the estimated grades for our students in Years 10, 11, 12 and 13. I must emphasise that these are, though, only estimates. Qualifications are awarded by exam boards and, therefore, they make the final call on each and every grade after applying their own statistical analysis. Results days are still August 13th and 20th but may well look different this year to previous years (for obvious reasons). Further details on this will follow when schools are informed by Qualifications Wales.

I hope that you all manage to stay well and that you find the time to enjoy the bank holiday. I will be issuing further updates throughout the second half of the summer term.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A D Williams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr A D Williams

Headteacher