



Friday, 03 July 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

Re: CHECK IN - CATCH UP – PREPARE - Our three stepped approach

It has been a pleasure for staff to meet with you all last week at our Wellbeing Meetings and more so to welcome your children back to school this week.

I am confident the children enjoyed their experiences returning to their school and can assure you that staff are equally delighted to have welcomed back and engaged with their pupils and students.

It has been heartening to hear and read the positive feedback we have received from many of you about our steps of reopening and we continue to commit to improving our current offer. This new way of learning and delivery will continue for the remaining two weeks of term.

Many conversations I have had personally with you or with colleagues are about the future and improved delivery of learning. I hope to give you some clarity.

Can we improve Remote Learning?

Recently the rules and guidance regarding the delivery of remote learning have been lifted and we are now allowed to deliver more interactive and live lessons. We are delighted with this decision and can now upgrade our delivery.

During this period of disruption, I would hope that education takes the opportunity to consider how we can move from our traditional model of education; where children sat in rows and the teacher delivered from the front, a model that is steeped in tradition. Instead, we want to use this opportunity to further enhance the use of **live lessons, face-to-face delivery, and flipped learning; “Blended Learning”**.

We are heavily involved in research around this new way of learning and many staff at Chepstow had *already* delivered in this way before COVID-19. We aim to build on these methods and within an agreed framework, which we will be sharing with parents, children and staff. We aim to develop this new method of ‘Blended Learning’ in the short, medium and long term using technology as the vehicle to support good teaching and learning.

The approaches to integrating blended learning are here to stay while this pandemic disrupts education. We want to take the opportunity to **shape** the educational future and consider how we can move from technology for delivery to technology being a vehicle to support excellent teaching and learning. The key to this will be a balanced and bespoke approach for individual learners, groups and year groups.



Early next week, Mr Goddard will write to you requesting your consent to deliver in this way, specifically about **live online lessons** and **protocols** to keep our staff, you and your child safe. Please take time to read the document, as we must ensure we follow all safeguarding procedures. Mr Goddard will also share a guide to ensure parents and children understand the step-by-step delivery and approaches.

What will September look like?

We will continue to follow the guidance shared by WAG and our Local Authority and continue to consider *our* plans for September. Decision making from WAG has been slow and at times frustrating, making things difficult for the school to plan effectively.

Rather than sit back and wait for a decision, we have decided to consider a number of plans and ideas for a sensible September start. We will remain cautious and will continue to consider key factors, which include:

- Health and safety and wellbeing needs of staff and children;
- The capacity of the building to include the full management of our facilities and logistical arrangements: including buildings, resources, cleaning and transport availability;
- The future planning of the education for your child and beyond the autumn term.

We assure you that the health and wellbeing of your child and the staff at Chepstow School is, as always, our primary concern. At this time, we are proposing that all staff return to school for September and we propose that the published timetable for your child will be followed, however, the delivery will be `blended` and has to be a flexible learning programme.

Your child's timetable and delivery will include an improved range of blended learning methods. This means that your child will continue their learning at school and at home, which will be complemented by live online lessons, independent learning, set work and flipped learning. Specific details and the delivery of the blend in school and at home will follow in the next couple of weeks and will be bespoke to year groups and your child.

We continue to follow our Education Minister, Kirsty Williams' announcements and anticipate a clear steer and direction.

Important update and information for examination groups:

English Education Examination vs. Welsh Education Examination

In England, the government directed schools to open several weeks ago and will have begun delivering content linked to the English Examination System. In Wales, as part of devolution, education follows its own route and destiny. Children in KS4 and KS5 examination courses will not be disadvantaged whilst they continue to study within the Welsh Education System.

A number of our children and family are concerned that some schools in England have begun learning and are being delivered new content. This is the decision for the English Education System. In Wales, the curriculum is presently suspended.



Future External Examinations

As of this week, the outline of considerations by Qualifications Wales around adjustments to next summer's exam series can be viewed by following the link [here](#). This document includes a range of possible options that are being considered, all of which have pitfalls:

At GCSE, considerations include:

- reducing content across GCSE qualifications
- introducing some options within exams and assessments
- removing entire units and reducing or removing NEA units

At A level, possible adjustments include:

- moving the exam timetable
- reviewing the number of qualifications that learners intend to take
- and considering any national requirements on the curriculum

The exam board will provide updates in July and we will pass on this information when it is received. We do not know how the WJEC will grade children in the summer series 2021.

Finally, I have been in education for over twenty-two years and have been a Headteacher for over six years of this time, never have I/we experienced times like this. I quote, "If you are not confused, you probably don't understand the situation." It is fair to say we do understand the situation that we are in and although clarity from our Minister has been elusive for some time, which makes planning very difficult, it will be the noteworthy agility, leadership, and creativity that staff have shown, where we have been prepared to embrace uncertainty but lead with purpose and moral authority during these testing and uncertain times.

I thank you for your continued support and ask you to stay safe and take care of yourselves and your families.

Best wishes

Matt Sims
Headteacher