



7 September 2021

Dear friends,

DOING, BEING, BECOMING

The beginning of an academic year offers us a renewed sense of expectation and hope. Rested from the long summer break, learners have returned to school with a fresh wind of enthusiasm and optimism. An abundance of opportunity – framed within the context of the ongoing public health challenge – lies before us.

The St Teilo's mission requires that, in all of our decision making, we improve excellence, increase equity and deepen faith. We do this so that we might be fully the people God is calling us to be. Our starting position, therefore, is one of love. If love is the Biblical mandate, then it must also be the mandate of our school. And no person is beyond the reach of love. If you wish to know what our school is all about, the answer is 'love'.

New York Times Bestselling author, Mike Dooley, says, "Life's not about expecting, hoping and wishing, it's about doing, being and becoming." So, how will we respond to the dilemma of educational disruption and learning decay in a mid-COVID world? What will we do to rebuild and repair?

- In Key Stage 3, we have increased the number of classes in each year group from 8 to 10, reducing class sizes from an average of 30 to 24. This will give children more time, in the safe and nurturing environment of the classroom, with their teachers.
- In Key Stage 4, we have rationalised the curriculum giving more time to foundation subjects and with at least 12 (smaller) classes for the core subjects.
- In Key Stage 5, there has been an increase from 4 to 5 lessons per week, maximising learning time in a sustainable and manageable way.
- We have resourced a new alternative curriculum, enrichment curriculum and complementary curriculum to ensure that children and young people receive the learning experiences they most need.
- There will be an increase in clinical interventions with school-based counselling offered on 5 (instead of 3) days per week. There will be an additional 2.5 days per week of art therapy and the capacity for educational psychology has been doubled.
- An additional 18 staff have been employed, with a particular increase in our youth work provision. Children will be enfolded in positive relationships with adults!

- We have retained six lessons per day, providing an additional 2 hours and 5 minutes of face-to-face teaching per week.

In addition, we have made significant improvements to our building as part of a two-year renovation programme.

Of course, COVID is still very much with us and already we are seeing a steep rise in infection rates. It is important, therefore, that we all familiarise ourselves with the new public health approaches, a summary of which can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Parents and carers are encouraged to be in regular contact with us. The principle points of contact are:

- **Year 7**
Mrs Pitt (r.pitt@stteilos.com) supported by Mr Miah, Miss Lia and Miss Powell.
- **Year 8**
Mrs Pitt (r.pitt@stteilos.com) supported by Mr Yates, Mrs Whyman and Mrs Miah.
- **Year 9**
Mrs Phillips (j.phillips@stteilos.com) supported by Mr Barnes and Mrs Shardlow.
- **Year 10**
Mrs Phillips (j.phillips@stteilos.com) supported by Mrs Rees and Mr Yendell.
- **Year 11**
Mrs Williams (a.williams@stteilos.com) and Miss Hallett (k.hallett@stteilos.com) supported by Mrs Johnson and Mr Walker.
- **Years 12 and 13**
Mrs Owen (e.owen@stteilos.com) supported by Mrs Gallo.

You are also invited to contact me directly by emailing headteacher@stteilos.com. Please do remember that staff are unlikely to be available without notice in person or by telephone (they are busy working with children); email is by far the most effective way to contact us!

St Teilo's prides itself on its culture of care and compassion. A number of our pupils suffer from extremely severe allergies to nuts. Therefore, any efforts you can make to **ensure your child does not bring nuts or nut-based products to school in their packed lunch** would be hugely appreciated. A small sacrifice on your child's part can, potentially, save a life.

Much remains unclear about the year ahead. However, I have compiled a list of 'frequently asked questions' to inform you of our plans as far as I am able. You will find these in **Appendix 2**.

I know that many of you are nervous about the uncertainty surrounding the public health picture now that schools have returned. I will, of course, keep you informed of developments. Please be reassured that St Teilo's is open for 'business as normal' and children are safe and well. In the words of Martin Luther King Jr., "Only in the darkness can you see the stars."

As ever,

Mr I Loynd
Headteacher

APPENDIX 1

COVID-19

Changes to contact tracing and self-isolation from this September.

As we return to school, there are some new arrangements in place when someone tests positive for COVID-19. These changes have been made possible by the vaccination programme and the significant reduction in numbers being hospitalised and suffering severe illness due to COVID-19 over recent months.

If your child tests positive for COVID-19 using a PCR test, NHS Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) will contact you, using the details provided when the PCR test was ordered. They will ask questions designed to identify recent close contacts of your child, and for contact details - if you know them - of the individual or their parent/guardian. TTP will then get in touch with these close contacts to provide instructions or advice.

Those who are under 18 or fully vaccinated are no longer required to self-isolate if they are identified as close contacts. But they will be contacted to let them know that they've been in close contact with someone who has tested positive. They will also be offered two PCR tests and provided with information and advice on how to minimise the risks of onward spread. If your child is identified as a close contact, they can still attend school unless they develop symptoms or are advised otherwise by TTP. Please continue to let us know if your child tests positive.

If a child tests positive, only a minority of their classmates will be identified as close contacts. But if there is a pattern of cases TTP may ask us to update you on the situation and remind you of key steps, including advising you to keep an eye out for new symptoms your child may develop, and to stay away from vulnerable family and friends in the short-term.

We do expect that there will be cases of COVID-19 across our community over the coming weeks, but this does not mean that COVID-19 is spreading within the school. Please continue to be vigilant for symptoms. If you are in any doubt, order a PCR test for your child at **www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test** or by calling **119**.

Anyone with symptoms - a new continuous cough, fever or high temperature or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste - should remain in self-isolation until the test result is known. You can find the latest information on self-isolation arrangements at **www.gov.wales/self-isolation**.

APPENDIX 2

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What time should my child arrive at school?

Pupils should be on site no later than 8.30am, ready for their first lesson at 8.40am. Parents and carers must make every effort to ensure children are in school and ready to learn before lesson 1.

Can I drive onto the school site?

You may drop your child off in the morning on the school site by pulling up to our safe drop-off zone. Please do not exceed the 5mph speed limit and please do not attempt to overtake another vehicle. Your patience will keep children safe. You will not be allowed onto the school site for collection in the afternoon. Instead, you should park sensibly and legally on the roads surrounding the site.

Will school catering resume?

Initially, children will need to continue to bring a packed lunch and drinking water to school. However, we are actively working to reintroduce some form of catering. The dining hall will not be available for the academic year as it has been repurposed to increase the amount of teaching space available to children.

What are the term dates?

- Autumn 1: 2 September 2021 – 22 October 2021
- Autumn 2: 1 November 2021 – 17 December 2021
- Spring 1: 4 January 2022 – 18 February 2022
- Spring 2: 28 February 2022 – 8 April 2022
- Summer 1: 25 April 2022 – 27 May 2022
- Summer 2: 6 June 2022 – 22 July 2022

When will INSET days be?

- INSET 1: 2 September 2021
- INSET 2: 3 September 2021
- INSET 3: 1 November 2021
- INSET 4: 4 January 2022
- INSET 5: 5 January 2022
- INSET 6: 28 February 2022
- INSET 7: 22 July 2022

Will after school clubs resume?

Yes, in line with public health advice. At this time, it is our intention to reintroduce the enrichment curriculum in full.

What are the rules on mobile phones in school?

Mobile phones are not permitted inside the school. This is one of our 'non-negotiables'. If a child is seen to be using their telephone inside the building, it will calmly be removed from them and returned at the end of the school day. Pupils are able to use their telephones in the designated outdoor 'phone zone' for their year group.

What uniform is required?

We have returned to the usual full uniform (see <http://www.stteilos.com/parents/uniform/>). Our uniform supplier, YC Sports, is experiencing some delays in their supply chain, especially with PE kit, so we will exercise some flexibility in the early weeks of the term. However, it is expected that parents and carers take responsibility for their child's uniform.

Who do I contact if I have question or concern about COVID?

Please contact Mr Loynd directly by email (headteacher@stteilos.com).

Are face masks required?

At 'Alert Level 0' there is no requirement for face coverings in school. We will inform you if this changes. However, face coverings are required on school transport.

What should I do if my child feels unwell?

If your child is unwell at all – and especially if they have a new continuous cough, fever or high temperature or loss of, or change in, sense of smell or taste – please keep them at home and book a PCR test.

Will absence for the purpose of a holiday be authorised?

In almost all circumstances, holidays during term time will not be authorised. After so much school closure, every lesson really does count.

Will there be school reports?

Yes, we will be reporting on student progress as usual. Parents and carers can expect outcome data (as a percentage) and an effort grade for all subjects at the end of each term.

What arrangements are there for parents evenings?

We don't want parents to have to wait many months for a busy parents' evening, especially having been denied access to the school for so long. Therefore, we will be trialling a new, digital solution which will allow parents and carers to book appointments with teachers at any point in the academic year. Meetings will be available for booking online every Thursday and further details will follow.

If my child is worried, who should they speak to?

In every learning zone, there are a minimum of two Youth Workers available all day. Children can also speak with their Achievement Leader or a member of our Wellbeing or Inclusion Team.

Does the school provide lateral flow devices?

Yes, available from Youth Workers in every learning zone.

Will there be school photos?

Yes, for Years 7, 10 and 12 as usual. These individual photographs will take place on 23 September 2021.

I still have questions!

Please email Mr Loynd at headteacher@stteilos.com and a member of staff will reply as soon as possible.