

AFON TÂF HIGH SCHOOL

Yew Street - Troedyrhiw -
Merthyr Tydfil - CF48 4ED

Tel: 01685 351830

Website: www.afontaf.merthyr.sch.uk

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YSGOL UWCHRADD AFON TÂF

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Headteacher / Prifathro
Mr S James BSc(Hons), MA, NPQH.

15th of July 2020

Dear Parents / Carers,

Firstly, may I begin by thanking you all for your continued support over the duration of lockdown and your patience in awaiting further clarification on our return in September. On Thursday the 9th of July, the Education Minister for Wales announced that all pupils would return to school from September the 1st. One could be forgiven for assuming that on that date all pupils would be on site; unfortunately, this is not the case.

There have been in-depth discussions held with the local authority regarding the phased return of pupils to school. It was felt that there needed to be a careful balance between ensuring that pupils are able to transition back in to the school setting comfortably whilst, at the same time, recognising the importance of pupils returning to education without unnecessary delay. Several models were proposed and discussed and the following is what has been agreed across all secondary schools in Merthyr:

Tuesday 1 st – Friday 4 th September	-	Staff only in school for 'Planning, Preparation and Re-adjustment'
Monday 7 th – Tuesday 8 th September	-	Years 7 and 11
Wednesday 9 th September	-	Years 7, 10 and 11
Thursday 10 th September	-	Years 7, 9, 10 and 11
Friday 11 th September onwards	-	All pupils in school

Whilst we are, of course, incredibly excited to have our pupils return to school, it is essential that we are able to do this in a way that ensures both our staff, pupils and families are as safe as possible. It is important to stress that our return to school does not signal an end to the pandemic; school life will not be returning to what we recognise as 'normal'. There will remain significant changes in place in terms of how the school operates and what will be expected of pupils; all of these will be expanded upon in a video that we will be producing and sharing with you.

We can confirm that there will be a very minor change to the time of our school day in that it will finish at 3:00 p.m. as opposed to 3:05 p.m. until further notice. The school day will still begin at 8:30 a.m. and pupils will receive their normal 5 hours teaching time per day. The way in which the school day is structured will change slightly and is outlined below:

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8:30-8:40	-	Registration
8:40 – 9:40	-	Lesson 1
9:40 – 10:40	-	Lesson 2
10:40 – 11:20	-	Break
11:20 – 12:20	-	Lesson 3
12:20 – 1:00	-	Break
1:00 – 2:00	-	Lesson 4
2:00 – 3:00	-	Lesson 5

As outlined above, both breaks will last for 40 minutes. This allows us to split the times at which year groups have the opportunity to access a hot meal / eat their packed lunch. Although a hot meal option will be available to pupils, I would like to strongly recommend that, where possible, pupils bring a packed lunch to school. Any hot meals will need to be pre-booked and paid for via ParentPay. The menu will be significantly reduced to two options and this will be released by Merthyr Council during the summer holidays. During the break where certain year groups are eating their lunch, the other year groups will be in a designated space outside; please ensure that your child has a coat. No pupils will be allowed to access the village during the school day. In addition to breaks, all practical physical education lessons will also be taught outdoors so please ensure that your child has appropriate PE kit.

We would like pupils to be in uniform although pupils should not wear blazers. I remind all parents that hoodies are banned from our school site and should not be worn by pupils as an alternative to a coat. Pupils should limit the amount of equipment they bring into school each day, to essentials such as lunch boxes, bags, coats, books and stationery. Pupils will be able to bring books home when homework is set but, at all other times, these will be kept in school.

Merthyr Council will also release further information regarding transport for those pupils that require it. For those choosing to transport their children to and from school, the outer bus park must be used. Please do not enter the inner bus park and, under no circumstances, should Yew Street be used for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,

Mr S Baber
Deputy Head Teacher