

**5th March 2021**

**Update from the Headteacher: 'Reflect – Reset – Reconnect'**

Dear Parent/Carer,

Following my update on Wednesday, I would like to present further details of our phased return to site for all learners. I know that you will fully appreciate the level of thought and planning invested to such proposals and the extent to which we have kept pupils being in receipt of the best possible learning provision whilst being fully supported in their wellbeing at the core of our rationale. The health, safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff continues to be our utmost priority hence why much emphasis has been placed on 'phasing' this return in a safe, measured and purposeful manner. This school has paid careful attention to most recent operational guidance from the Welsh Government and this has informed our plans. Please find below a summary of the key information followed by an FAQ document and summary of specific timings for each day:

| Date                                   | Action and Year group Involved  |
|--|---|
| <b>Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March</b>    | <p><b>Years 11, 12 and 13 to return to site for full time teaching</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Full time teaching from <b><u>Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March to Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March inclusively</u></b></li> <li>➤ Form tutorial to be facilitated during periods 1 and 2 with timetable to commence period 3 (collaboration will commence period 3 also)</li> <li>➤ Please see attached appendix for timings and entry points to the site</li> </ul> |
| <b>Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March</b> | <p><b>Years 9 and 10 return to site for a wellbeing 'check-in' with their form tutor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The workshop: <b>'Reflect, Reset, Reconnect'</b> will support learners in all aspects of their full return to site in the summer term</li> <li>➤ Please see attached appendix for timings and entry points to the site</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March</b>  | <p><b>Years 7 and 8 return to site for a wellbeing 'check-in' with their form tutor</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The workshop: <b>'Reflect, Reset, Reconnect'</b> will support learners in all aspects of their full return to site in the summer term</li> <li>➤ Please see attached appendix for timings and entry points to the site</li> </ul>  |

### Additional Information

|   |
|---|
| <p>✓ On <b>Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March</b>, whilst Year 7,8,9 and 10 tutors meet their forms, identified <b>Year 11,12 and 13 learners from practical based subjects will be given the opportunity to engage in on-site practical activities with teachers</b>. Should your child be involved in any of these scheduled activities, we will let you know in due course</p>           |
| <p>✓ <b>Years 11, 12 and 13 will be given three days: Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> and Friday 26<sup>th</sup> March to work independently and ‘catch up’ on outstanding work ahead of the summer term</b>. Subject teachers will guide all learners on how to make most effective and efficient use of this time. Please note that no new teaching will therefore take place on these days</p> |
| <p>✓ <b>Years 7,8,9 and 10 will be given two days</b> (Wednesday and Friday – Years 7 and 8 and Thursday and Friday - Years 9 and 10) <b>to work independently and ‘catch up’ on outstanding work ahead of the summer term</b>. Subject teachers will guide all learners on how to make most effective and efficient use of this time. Please note that no new teaching will therefore take place on these days.</p>  |
| <p>✓ All learners will need to be in full uniform</p>   |
| <p>✓ Year 11 learners should bring a packed-lunch to school as our catering team will not be resuming their service until after the Easter holiday</p>  |
| <p>✓ We are awaiting confirmation from the local authority on school transport and we will update you in due course</p>   |
| <p>✓ As per Welsh Government guidelines, all learners are now required to wear face coverings in all areas of the school building to include classrooms</p>   |
| <p>✓ As per the school and local authority’s robust risk assessment, all learners and staff will be expected to strictly follow all procedures to keep everyone on site as safe as possible: staying within a contact group zone, following one-way protocols, washing and sanitising hands regularly etc.</p>  |
| <p>✓ As per the school’s risk assessment in accordance with LA policy, pupils remain as a year ‘contact’ group and therefore previous arrangements remain in place for the self-isolation of this contact group should there be a positive case in the year group within a 48 hour period</p>   |
| <p>✓ Information will be sent to all families about learners in Year 10,11,12 and 13 being given the option to take ‘test’ kits home in the coming weeks</p>  |

I thought it may be helpful to detail my response to potential questions you may have which hopefully will give you further insight to our rationale behind all decisions:

#### Why are Years 11,12 and 13 being prioritised for full-time teaching on site?

- The Welsh Government has stipulated that priority must be given to Years 11 and 13;
- Only on Wednesday did the Welsh Government announce that ‘opportunities should be given to learners in key stage three to have a ‘wellbeing check-in’ prior to the Easter holiday.

### **Why aren't Year 10 returning to site alongside other 'examination groups?'**

- The Welsh Government have said that only Year 11 and 13 should return to site for full-time teaching and that priority should be given to learners in Years 10/12 only who were due to sit scheduled external examinations this summer;
- The school has made the decision to prioritise the full return of Year 12 to continue to support all learners in their wellbeing following the recent and sudden death of one of their peers; we believe very strongly that it is in all of the pupils' best interests to return to 'normality' as soon as possible;
- With the return of three full year groups (approaching 700 pupils,) and with Year 10 pupils only due to sit English Literature this summer (compared to other schools in the city who's pupils were due to face in excess of 10 exams) we made the considered decision to prioritise the earlier return of Year 12 to site;
- It is also relevant to return to Welsh Government's operational guidance which strongly guides schools to only return pupils to site if there is an urgent need; as the school has a robust and effective blended learning provision in place for all learners, pupils are not being deprived of any 'learning' whilst working remotely for a further two weeks.

### **Why choose to focus only on wellbeing when Years 7,8,9,10 return for their check in; why not return to normal teaching on site?**

- We feel very strongly that our learners will benefit greatly from having time to reflect on what has been a challenging few months, press that reset button in terms of familiarising themselves with all sorts of aspects of 'school life' and most importantly to reconnect with their peers and teachers. The benefits of focusing on such important social themes hugely outweigh the need to replicate the quality teaching and learning of which they continue to be in receipt daily;
- These learners are not 'returning to school' as they have continued to engage in their learning; what's important for our young people initially is reconnecting with each other face-to-face.

### **Why do pupils need two or three days before the Easter holiday to work independently and 'catch up' on their studies?**

- You will notice that the title of this phased return to site is 'Reflect, Reset, Reconnect' very purposely to move away from the national and in our opinion, unhelpful rhetoric of 'catch up' and 'recovery' models; it is so important we draw on the positives from what we have all learned and how we have all developed over the last 12 months and instead use this to look forward and be confident about what we can achieve collectively moving forward. Giving all pupils this 'breathing space' to reflect and work independently on any aspect of their studies will hopefully enable them to feel confident about pressing that reset button at the start of the summer term;
- Staff will help students structure this time and guide them to aspects of their work they should focus on;
- Practically, it is also important to be transparent about how necessary it was to make teachers 'available' to lead the wellbeing sessions and without scheduling this 'independent time' for pupils, the wellbeing time would not have been possible as tutors would have of course been teaching;

- Scheduling this independent time for learners has also freed up time for teachers of our practical subjects to plan and execute activities with their Year 11,12 and 13 classes on site in specialist subject areas; so critical for pupils' development and progress in these subjects.

### **Schools across the city appear to have different models; why is Bassaleg different?**

- This is not the case. All Newport Headteachers have agreed on very broad principles to include the return of Year 11,12 and 13 learners full time and using the second week to return key stage three learners in a phased way.

### **If my child is in school, does this mean they can meet up with their friends outside of school?**

- No. The Welsh Government lockdown rule remains in place for everyone to stay at home apart from when needing to make an essential journey; so critical in continuing to reduce community transmission rates and another reason for our gradual approach to a phased return.

### **Should we expect to see a full return to site for all pupils after Easter?**

- We very much hope so! All proposed arrangements continue to be subject to Welsh Government reviews which will determine if it is safe for all pupils to return to site. We will of course continue to update you should such plans change;
- Please note that the times listed below are for the fortnight commencing the 15<sup>th</sup> March only. We will remind pupils and parents/carers of pupils' usual start/finish times and entry/exit points before the start of the Summer Term.

**Please find below an appendix detailing the start/finish times and entry/exit points for each year group for the fortnight commencing the 15<sup>th</sup> March and an overview of the actions for each year group in one summary for your convenience.**

Can I finally take this opportunity to thank you all for your continued support of the school. We are very much looking forward to seeing all of our pupils return to site and reconnecting with each other in the weeks ahead. Look after yourselves, look after each other.

Cofion cynnes



Victoria Lambe  
Headteacher

## Reflect – Reset – Reconnect Fortnight Commencing the 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021

| Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> March – Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
|  | Start Time   | Finish Time   | Entry & Exit gate  |
| <b>Year 11</b>   | 8.35am   | 3.05pm  | Forge  |
| <b>Year 12</b>   | 9.00am<br><i>(10.00am start<br/>Monday 15<sup>th</sup> only)</i> | 1.20pm<br><i>(option to stay on site at<br/>lunchtime to reconnect<br/>with small groups of<br/>friends, leaving at 2.00pm)</i> | Forge  |
| <b>Year 13</b>   | 9.00am   | 1.20pm  | Forge  |
| <b>Key worker &amp;<br/>ALN provision<br/>(Years 7-10)</b>     | 8.35am   | 1.10pm  | Griffin<br><i>(except ALN taxis<br/>arriving in bus bay)</i> |
| Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> March                               |  |   |  |
| <b>Year 9</b>  | 8.35am   | 11.00am   | Griffin  |
| <b>Year 10</b>   | 8.35am   | 11.00am   | Forge  |
| Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> March                                |  |   |  |
| <b>Year 7</b>  | 8.35am   | 11.00am   | Griffin  |
| <b>Year 8</b>  | 8.35am   | 11.00am   | Forge  |

| Year | Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> March | Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup> March | Wed 17 <sup>th</sup> March | Thurs 18 <sup>th</sup> March | Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> March |
|------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 13   | In school                     | In school                      | In school                  | In school                    | In school                     |
| 12   | In school                     | In school                      | In school                  | In school                    | In school                     |
| 11   | In school                     | In school                      | In school                  | In school                    | In school                     |
| 10   | At home online lessons        | At home online lessons         | At home online lessons     | At home online lessons       | At home online lessons        |
| 9    | At home online lessons        | At home online lessons         | At home online lessons     | At home online lessons       | At home online lessons        |
| 8    | At home online lessons        | At home online lessons         | At home online lessons     | At home online lessons       | At home online lessons        |
| 7    | At home online lessons        | At home online lessons         | At home online lessons     | At home online lessons       | At home online lessons        |

| Year | Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March | Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March | Wed 24 <sup>th</sup> March  | Thurs 25 <sup>th</sup> March  | Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> March |
|------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|
| 13   | In school                     | In school                      | At home independent work<br>(unless identified for onsite<br>practical workshops) | At home independent work<br>(unless identified for onsite<br>practical workshops) | At home independent work      |
| 12   | In school                     | In school                      | At home independent work<br>(unless identified for onsite<br>practical workshops) | At home independent work<br>(unless identified for onsite<br>practical workshops) | At home independent work      |
| 11   | In school                     | In school                      | At home independent work<br>(unless identified for onsite<br>practical workshops) | At home independent work<br>(unless identified for onsite<br>practical workshops) | At home independent work      |
| 10   | At home online lessons        | At home online lessons         | In school – wellbeing catch up  | At home independent work  | At home independent work      |
| 9    | At home online lessons        | At home online lessons         | In school – wellbeing catch up  | At home independent work  | At home independent work      |
| 8    | At home online lessons        | At home online lessons         | At home independent work  | In school – wellbeing catch up  | At home independent work      |
| 7    | At home online lessons        | At home online lessons         | At home independent work  | In school – wellbeing catch up  | At home independent work      |