

**Good afternoon,**

**I hope you are all keeping well and are looking forward to the festive period. I am sure you are all pleased that the announcement earlier from The Welsh Government won't impact too greatly on your family Christmas plans (unless you are really into clubbing!)**

**Yesterday the Welsh Government did however make the announcement that schools in Wales would be returning later than expected in January. (Please see attached letter from Flintshire County Council)**

**This decision will have no impact on Ysgol Derwen as children were not expected to return to school until Monday January 10<sup>th</sup>.**

**The Castell Alun cluster of schools met last June to decide on common holiday and training day dates. We anticipated that there may be further issues with Covid during the Winter so decided to use the additional bank holiday (to celebrate the Queens Jubilee) on Wednesday December 22<sup>st</sup>, and use Thursday January 6<sup>th</sup> and Friday January 7<sup>th</sup> as training days. We had planned that in the eventuality of Covid making an unwanted return, we had organised a natural firebreak over the Christmas break to help keep transmission rates down in our schools and community, and to also give the children and their families an extended break after another very disruptive and stressful year.**

**The only change we will experience will be the rescheduling of the two training days in January (these dates are yet to be set) which have now been replaced by two national planning days. These planning days are to enable schools to evaluate their levels of workforce absence after the Christmas break and to give schools time to revisit their risk assessments to ensure they can operate safely. Schools have been advised to have the highest levels of Covid controls in place.**

**As things stand, I intend to open the school fully on Monday January 10<sup>th</sup>. I am also aiming to keep the school times as they are currently. Due to the new build, and previously Covid restrictions, the school is still having staggered playtimes/ lunch etc and I will endeavour to**

**keep things as close as possible to what is considered a “normal” school day for the children.**

**I will be making final plans to welcome the children back to school during the two planning days and will send out more detailed plans ahead of the first day of the new term.**

**Thank you for your continued support throughout another challenging year and I wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas.**

**We all know that the Covid situation can change very quickly, so please keep your eye on the news over the break and fingers crossed I will see you all again on Monday January 10<sup>th</sup>.**

**Take care and have a safe Christmas Holiday with your loved ones.**

**R Jones**