**YSGOL DERWEN/DERWEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

19 March 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

**School Closure Information/ Home Working**

Given yesterday's announcement by the Government, that all schools in Wales will be closed by Friday, I am sure that some of you, like ourselves, have many questions today.

As schools we have no more information other than what has been announced and we have been, and still  getting our information, like you, through the news. We had no prior knowledge of any impending decision regarding schools or its implications on the running of schools. I found out about school closures via a BBC notification and txt message from the office staff whilst getting on a bus to return to school from Glan Llyn with our Year 5 Class!

This is an unprecedented situation and one which is causing much anxiety and upset to everyone. Please bear in mind that the school staff also have the same worries; underlying health issues, elderly parents and grandparents to care for, and their own children at home etc. and yet they are still expected to turn up to work to care for and educate our children.

Whilst many schools have already taken the decision to close due to staff shortage, we will remain open for the next two days to try to give you as much time as possible to make childcare arrangements.

With the statutory curriculum also being suspended by Welsh Government the staff at Ysgol Derwen have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure your children can still access work at home.  You may have seen Universities on the news conducting home lectures using the latest technology. Please understand that Ysgol Derwen is a small village school with financial pressures who will be attempting distance learning for the first time (as will most schools in the UK). More details regarding distance learning will be released over the next two days. Whilst most of you will be very grateful of any work sent home, some will be expecting personalised learning plans updated daily. Please understand and be realistic about what is going on in the world. During this difficult period we must work together for the benefit of all.

We are still awaiting detailed guidance from the Wales Minister for Education as within the announcement yesterday there were a few phrases which were open to interpretation as to how they will be addressed within schools. Again this was the first schools found out about the proposal to keep schools open for key workers and vulnerable children. We are currently awaiting confirmation we will remain open next week for some pupils and if so who they will be. Teachers have not yet been allocated classes as Key Workers so we will also have the difficulty of asking staff to undertake any changes here at school whilst their children, whom are away from school, have no one to look after them.

I understand that some of you are anxious and need assurance that your child will be one of those pupils. When we have clarity on this, we will inform you.

Can I also please ask all parents to only follow national news as a number of calls are being received, especially from parents of one particular class, asking for all sorts of advice and for the school to send out information regarding fake news and rumours e.g:

* The school was going to close last Friday (WhatsApp – numerous calls)
* Emergency meetings taking place last Thursday in school to announce next day closure (WhatsApp – no meeting no closure.)
* “They better be sending work home for us to educate our children” (WhatsApp)

We find it highly offensive as a group of professionals who have been working overtime to get things in place. I could go on but can I please ask you to be mindful of what you are sharing on social media as is does not help during this worldwide (not just Kinnerton) crisis.

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Our main concern in school over the past month has revolved around informing all children and staff through school assembly and class lessons on the importance of good hygiene. Children have been set fun challenges to try not to touch their faces all day – that was difficult! Posters regarding hygiene and handwashing techniques have been shared in assembly, class and in posters all-round the school. Our main aim has been to provide a safe place to come to each day to learn and meet friends away from a developing situation being broadcast 24 hours a day.

Plans will evolve throughout the day and tomorrow. We will endeavour to provide you with as much information as possible throughout the day.

We ask you all to please not phone school to discuss this as we will be focusing all our attention and efforts on our plans, as and when we receive the information we need.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please take care and be safe.

Yours sincerely

**R Jones**

**Headteacher**