

Dear Parents/Carers,

With the end of term fast approaching we are experiencing a very different run up to the Christmas break! We are trying to keep things for the children as normal as possible during the school day and to help keep their Christmas magic alive at school. I love hearing their daily stories about what the Elves On The Shelves have been up to!

I want to make you aware that we will strive to keep Ysgol Derwen open until 18th December, as directed by Welsh Government and the LA, provided we do not have a number of staff or pupils having confirmed cases of Covid over the coming days.

Primary and Secondary Heads' have been advised by Flintshire LA that it is a matter for individual schools and their governing bodies to make the decision to remain open or to close. That decision must be based on a risk assessment taking into consideration factors such as :

- sufficient staffing
- confirmed cases of Covid at the school
- the rate of Covid transmission in the local area

Castell Alun, along with other high schools in Flintshire, announced yesterday that they will be closing on Friday December 11<sup>th</sup> with the last week of term moving to online learning. As you are probably aware, high schools have suffered from a higher number of Covid outbreaks and subsequent isolation periods than we have. They have also experienced a greater impact on their staffing, which we understand has contributed to their decision yesterday. We hope that high school children will remain at home as requested and will not mix in the local community and in each other's houses next week, so as to keep the Higher Kinnerton and Ysgol Derwen community safe. As you are aware, we have worked very hard this term to keep children and staff safe within their bubbles.

I am aware that many of you will be concerned about the Christmas period and hoping that you will be able to share it with your extended households. We have had a few requests from parents about pupils not attending Ysgol Derwen next week so as to isolate before Christmas. Although we intend to be open next week, if you are planning to keep your child/children home to isolate in readiness for the Christmas period, please notify the school so we can update our records. These requests will be authorized.

Please note however that this is the last week of the Christmas term and the children in school will be mostly completing craft activities, which may not easily transfer to home learning.

This is an ever changing situation and our plans can be forced to alter very quickly and without warning. There are already a number of authorities in Wales planning to close on Wednesday next week and moving to blended learning for Thursday and Friday. I will keep you fully informed of any such changes if necessary.

I would also like to thank you all again for your fantastic support in wearing face coverings when picking up and dropping off in our combined effort to keep everyone associated with Ysgol Derwen safe. I think many of us will be glad to see the back of 2020 and look forward to some brighter times in the New Year.

This has been an extremely difficult time, but again I thank you for your continued support, patience, kindness and understanding.

Stay Safe

R Jones