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Ysgol Uwchradd Llanwern High School

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Dear Parents/Carers

It has been lovely to welcome back the pupils this week and we look forward to seeing Year 9 tomorrow for their first of two opportunities to check in with school. I have also been very impressed with the level of compliance pupils have shown with regards to wearing face coverings in the indoor communal areas of the building.

However, with our return to school following the recent lockdown, you may well be aware that the Welsh Government issued operational guidance to support the reopening of schools which makes reference to the need for pupils to wear face coverings in classrooms when a strict 2m social distance is unable to be maintained.

'If social distancing cannot be maintained, face coverings should be worn anywhere on the school estate, including in the classroom by staff at primary and secondary schools and secondary school learners.'

(Page 20 of the Operational guidance for schools and settings from 15 March: How schools and other providers can make their sites safe for staff and learners - updated 03/03/21)

I was keen to welcome all pupils back as soon as possible rather than opting for partial year group return and as such we continue to operate with full classes of pupils in classrooms which cannot support strict 2m social distancing, therefore it is the expectation that all pupils wear a face covering in lessons.

The use of face coverings is something that we have all had to get used to as one of the measures to help protect each other against transmission of the virus and although pupils may not be as susceptible to serious illness if they contract the virus, without face coverings, the virus is more able to be spread within school, the community and at home where it will certainly have more serious consequences.

Whilst we remain hopeful that the vaccine programme will continue to be rolled out, we all need to remain vigilant as many people are still waiting for their first dose and a significant number of those who have received their first dose are still not completely protected as they have not received their second.

You will also have seen on the news the suggestion that the vaccine program may stall due to issues with supply and news too that some European countries are now moving into a third wave, with lockdowns and school closures either being considered or already implemented.

The last thing any of us wants is to have to face any more periods of school closure or groups of pupils having to self isolate because of a positive case and the wearing of face coverings in school, not only in the corridors but also in the classrooms, will protect against this.

So far, staff have been encouraging and supporting pupils to understand the importance of these face coverings and why they currently need to be worn inside the school building at all times as they have returned and adjusted to getting back to school this week, but can I ask that you too please continue to

reinforce this message with your child / children at home as we need to secure compliance with the current Welsh Government guidance as we move forward.

Thank you for your support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mrs. Jarvis', written in a cursive style.

Mrs. Jarvis
Headteacher