



UCAC Questions for Welsh Government

1. Which staff should/shouldn't return to school?

There needs to be clarity of expectation in relation to who is expected to be present at school, and clear advice about various different sets of circumstances and scenarios. We note the initial information stated at the time of the Minister's announcement.

(i) Health issues

- those who are shielding; those who are co-habiting with someone who is shielding
- those with increased vulnerability (including pregnant women); those who are co-habiting with someone with increased vulnerability
- those suffering from anxiety and other relevant mental health conditions

(ii) Care duties

There needs to be clarity and consistency about the situation of the following categories of teachers - their right to work from home and, if necessary, to have flexibility in relation to their hours of work:

- parents of young children for whom there is no childcare provision in place
- parents who do not wish to send their children to a hub or back to school (for whatever reason)
- those who are carers for other members of their family and for whom there is no alternative, or sufficient alternative, provision

(iii) Travel distances

What is considered to be a safe/acceptable travel distance for staff to reach school? Substantial number of teachers travel further than the 5-mile limit that is currently in place, and many travel far greater distances e.g. 30 or 40 miles.

2. The 'extra' week 18-24 July

Guidance needs to make clear what should happen to staff in the following categories:

- those who have holidays booked for the week in question (and holiday companies have not yet cancelled)
- those whose family members may have booked holiday to co-ordinate with theirs (or have other arrangements e.g. weddings)
- those whose service was due to end on 31 August due to retirement
- those whose service was due to end on 31 August due to end of contract
- those who will be starting a new job in a new school (and potentially a new Local Authority) at the beginning of the academic year
- those who are working full-time this term but are returning in September on a part-time contract
- where a school is closing at the end of the school year

Should they be expected to work the extra week or not?

If so, where relevant, should they receive payment in lieu of the extra week's holiday in the autumn?

3. Staffing levels/Division of responsibilities

Clearly staff audits will need to be undertaken in order to ascertain realistic staffing levels; these will need to cover teaching and support staff, as well as other essential on-site staff such as cleaners and will need to be updated regularly as individual and more general circumstances change. The following questions arise:

- how much flexibility is it appropriate to request from teachers in terms of age-groups and subjects? [any such requests must obviously be discussed with staff individually]
- will it be acceptable to employ supply teachers – and if so, who will pay the bill? [we understand that at least one Local Authority has instructed schools not to use supply teachers during this period]
- at what point should schools consider reducing operations or closing altogether due to lack of staff; how should this be managed?
- should teachers who are not teaching on a particular day/session be expected to be present at school?
- who will be responsible for preparing and delivering distance learning when large numbers of teachers will be expected to be in schools teaching face-to-face?

4. Transport

- How will it be possible to ensure social distancing on school transport (buses, minibuses, taxis)?
- Will Welsh Government direct Local Authorities to provide school transport? [we are aware of at least one Local Authority that has stated that it will not be providing school transport and that parents must bring their children to school if they wish to attend]
- Will public transport be running?
- What is deemed to be a safe/acceptable travel distance for pupils? In the Welsh-medium sector, travel distances can be substantially greater

5. Health, hygiene, safety and wellbeing

- Whose responsibility will it be to complete risk assessments for schools? There will need to be clear guidance about the types of risk assessment that will be required.
- What are the guidelines on the use of PPE?
- Is there a guarantee of sufficient supplies of PPE? [we understand that there has been an insufficient supply for some hubs]; will staff and pupils be allowed to use their own PPE where they wish to do so?
- Is there a guarantee of sufficient supplies of essential hygiene products such as sanitisers, handtowels etc.
- Has there been an audit in relation to the sufficiency of cleaning services? Do the present cleaning staff have sufficient hours and expertise to undertake the extra expert daily cleaning needed?
- Will teaching staff be required to sanitise equipment within their classrooms?
- Will every member of staff and every returning pupil be tested?
- Will a rolling programme of testing be established?
- Will all staff and pupils have access to counselling?

6. Special schools and learners with ALN

- Is it envisaged that Special schools will reopen for all learners before the summer?
- What advice will be provided to mainstream schools in relation to learners with ALN – particularly those who normally have one-to-one support?

7. Budgets

There will undoubtedly be extra costs involved in delivering the proposals – as well as any arrangements that may be put in place for the autumn term (staffing, extra cleaning, extra hygiene products, transport etc.). There is an urgent

need for clarity and consistency about how this funding will be provided and spent. Schools need clarity about their own budgets.

- Who will pay for what? What funding mechanisms will be in place?

8. Hubs

- If Hubs continue to operate beyond school hours and school term-times, will they become the responsibility of local authorities (including the responsibility to ensure the presence of a member of staff qualified in first aid) and no longer involve teaching staff? Will they minimise their reliance on school leaders, including ensuring that they are not required to be on-site 8am – 6pm every day, and ensuring that they get their statutory holiday over the summer?
- Has an audit been conducted of the capacity within school buildings for maintaining hub provision alongside giving all pupils the opportunity to return before the summer? Any audit would need to bear in mind that the number of pupils in the hubs could increase substantially if school staff return to school.
- Will teachers be entitled to bring their children to the hub provision at the school at which they work?

9. Training

- What training will be provided to ensure that all staff have a thorough understanding of the new systems, policies and requirements (cleaning procedures, movement through school, shared equipment e.g. ipads, musical instruments, what to do in case of illness, understanding of risk assessments etc)?

10. Other issues

- What exactly will be the expectation from schools? Is the emphasis to be on wellbeing, reintegration, education, preparing for next term and the 'new normal'? There needs to be consistency.
- When can teachers and pupils expect clarity of any modifications to courses/assessment requirements for the current Years 10 and 12? Lack of clarity on this matter is problematic in terms of teachers' ability to plan effectively for their pupils and is therefore a matter of urgency
- What transition arrangements will be acceptable for Year 6? Will physically visiting the secondary school be permitted or not? If so, would this need specific permission from parents, and would individual teachers also need to have agreed to accompany them?
- Has consideration been given to staff returning before pupils to prepare the way?
- Has consideration been given to the issue of threatening/aggressive behaviour from pupils; hitting, kicking and – in particular – spitting, will all need to be considered, and guidance given as to how schools should respond when the usual physical restraint will not be available to them
- Would it be acceptable for primary schools to allow statutory aged pupils only to return before the summer?
- Will there be a guarantee that the school day will be no longer than usual?

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