

Update for Schools

Monday 19th April 2021

The pandemic situation has greatly improved, and schools have returned to more normal operations. After a long period of closure Plas Pencelli is also preparing to open. We look forward to running outdoor education residentials during the summer months. We were due to reopen on 17th May in line with step 3 of the ending of lockdown. However, it has become clear that this will not be possible. Therefore, Plas Pencelli will now **reopen to schools from Monday June 7th**, and we are confident that this will go ahead.

Why was the restart date moved backwards?

1. There is still uncertainty whether step 3 will go ahead on 17th May.
2. There is no confirmation from Welsh Government of when outdoor centres in Wales can open. Elections are on May 6th which is delaying announcements.
3. Coronavirus protocols for the outdoor sector negotiated with the Department for Education have not been finalised.
4. Lack of surety is delaying the return of staff and recruitment.
5. We must follow the guidelines of England or Wales and we always need to give sufficient notice to staff and schools.

For all these reasons we have had to cancel all bookings up until June 7th.

Will Plas Pencelli definitely be open from June 7th?

We can never be certain but with coronavirus rates diminishing dramatically, the vaccine continuing to be rolled out at pace and a willingness for the home nation governments to continue down the path to end of all restrictions then it does look very probable that Plas Pencelli will reopen on 7th June for the summer period, in an adjusted way with coronavirus protocols in place.

Coronavirus Protocols. Schools will want to discuss arrangements about coronavirus and various adjustments are planned in line with current standards. However, the Coronavirus protocols for the outdoor sector have not yet been approved by government. Once they are they will be made available to all schools along with Plas Pencelli's Coronavirus Risk Assessment and safe operating procedures. We will then liaise with each school so that we can adjust measures to be in line as far as possible with school standards so that young people can more easily understand and stick to the protocols at Plas Pencelli. Schools will want to undertake risk assessments for the travel to and from the centre and overnight supervision with regard to coronavirus. Plas Pencelli will take responsibility for all other activities. We will also want to talk to every school to discuss arrangements for accommodation, activity groups and bathroom facilities to ensure all is sorted before arrival.

In summary if your school has a booking at Plas Pencelli then:

1. **Booking between now and June 7th**
This has now been cancelled.

2. **Booking between June 7th and July 31st**

This will now go ahead but will have some adjustments in line with Coronavirus Protocols. This will not significantly affect the quality of the course.

3. **Booking from September 1st 2021**

Plas Pencelli should be operating as normal.

A Final Note

- No school has been penalised by Plas Pencelli during the pandemic.
- There is no better time for young people to attend an outdoor education residential.
- We have vacancies from October 2021 onwards.
- Bookings are taken up to 2 years in advance and there is much competition.
- Please make contact if you have any queries.

I look forward, along with all the staff, to welcoming you to Plas Pencelli and a memorable week of outdoor education for young people in the Brecon Beacons.

Thank you for your continued support.

Peter Blackburn (Head of Centre)

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