

Update for Schools Thursday 3rd September 2020

(please refer to previous statements)

When will Plas Pencelli be open to schools again?

It's good to see schools now returning. However the Department for Education is still at present advising against domestic (UK) overnight and overseas educational visits. We understand that schools need to operate within government guidelines. In addition the Welsh Government have rules in place that make it very difficult to operate a residential centre for large visiting groups during these times. We await changes by the respective governments before we can open the centre for schools. We believe changes are imminent.

What is being done about it?

The whole outdoor sector is under risk at this time and has been lobbying hard with various government agencies. As a centre we have also made representation. The indication is that a decision rests with the Secretary of State for Education and we expect to receive this in the next week or so. There has also been consultation with the Welsh Secretary of State for Education who has indicated that she will support the opening of outdoor centres and a decision is expected from the Welsh Cabinet also in the next week or so.

We would expect to hear these decisions by Monday September 14th. We will immediately inform all schools. We are hopeful of a positive change.

A Safe Environment at Plas Pencelli.

Once open we will create an environment for young people at least as safe as back in school. We will liaise closely with each school before any visit. We will adjust arrangements where we can to operate in line with arrangements back in school. All areas of operations will be risk assessed. We will only have one school on site at this time. 130 beds, 30 bedrooms, 2 dining areas, numerous showering facilities with 17 acre grounds provides a great deal of space for all to safely socially distance.

We have a booking for Plas Pencelli in the autumn term. What should we do?

Schools won't be penalised for canceling due to coronavirus reasons. If you are able we would encourage you to wait a little longer before deciding to cancel your course. It may all look more encouraging in a fortnight's time. As long as we have a month's notice we will have staff and resources in place and ready to go. We also appreciate that this is less than ideal and that for many reasons you will probably want at least a month's notice if not more. In particular those booked in October may decide they can't wait any longer.

We have a booking for Plas Pencelli in the spring term. What should we do?

It's still over 4 months before the start of the spring term. There isn't any indication that the centre won't be open throughout 2021. We would expect to be running but probably still operating with coronavirus control measures for a time which we are confident won't affect the success or enjoyment of a visit to Plas Pencelli. The best advice is to maintain your booking for now and follow developments through the regular statements we will issue during the autumn term. Feel free also to approach the centre directly. I'm confident that surety will increase as time goes on. If you are tempted to move your course further back in the year at this stage do bear in mind that there is limited availability in 2021 right now.

Is it worth waiting?

Every school's circumstances are different but if you are able to maintain your booking and we receive news that we are able to open I do think you will be very pleased with the outcome. Plas Pencelli is in prime condition. The hills are golden, the rivers and canals are clear and the grounds are in a great state. A week at Plas Pencelli for a student right now would probably be the ideal experience mentally, socially and intellectually to 'invigorate' their school year. The staff are motivated to provide a memorable and life changing experience for each individual and there is probably no better time to visit Plas Pencelli.

Contact Details until Further Notice:

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