

12th February 2021

Dear Parent or Guardian

As we approach the end of this most challenging of half terms, we would like to acknowledge the challenges we have all faced but also take the opportunity to reflect on the successes of the last few weeks. We would like to thank you and your families; we know what a difficult job home schooling is, especially when juggling jobs and other commitments at the same time, but you have done a marvellous job in supporting your children and we have been delighted with the commitment and tenacity shown by all.

After Christmas was a very dark time for many families suffering with ill health, and for the NHS struggling to cope with the number of COVID-19 cases in hospital. We all had to quickly adjust to the demands of home learning at short notice, but this time with the focus on academic progress as well as wellbeing. In such desperate circumstances, our 'Value of the Month' was never more apt: 'Hope'. We needed it! We were very proud to be able to provide hope to our NHS colleagues too, with wonderful and heartfelt messages of support and encouragement such as these from our pupils:



Carys – Year 13



Kate – Year 8

“You are a group of incredibly brave individuals, coming together despite battling staff shortages and illness to put the health of your community over yourselves. I hope somewhere in all of this, you and your family are finding time to take care of each other and that you are starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. No matter how tiring it gets and how drained you may feel, just know that we are all behind you and we as a community will do our part to stay at home to protect ourselves and most importantly to protect you.”

Holly – Year 13

We hoped that our pupils would embrace the new format of home learning, following their usual timetabled lessons and using Microsoft Teams to keep in touch with their teachers. We appreciate that this has been challenging for many families with limited access to electronic devices and the internet but have been heartened by the effort put in by so very many pupils and families. Teachers are learning new skills too; offering more live lessons and finding new and innovative ways to engage the pupils from a distance. It is very difficult to judge workload for both pupils and staff and we are continually striving to balance the blended learning approach to make it authentic and reasonable for all.

Many departments have their own twitter and Instagram accounts where they have been sharing examples of work, but here are a few excellent examples just in case you haven't seen them:

Textiles



ICT

Pupils working on projects to promote being 'Internet Safe'.

Tower of Treasure secure your secrets...

The tower of treasure is a place where you can store your valuables however there are hackers that try to steal your messages and identity. It teaches you to;

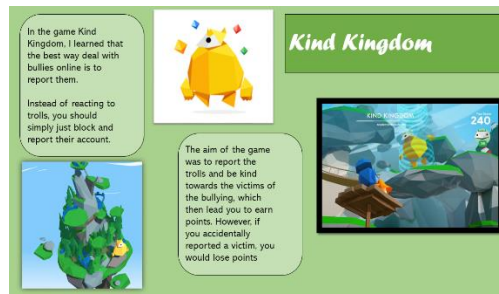
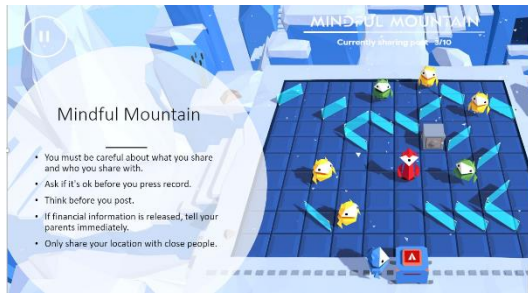
- Keep all your information in a secure place
- Have a strong password that contains at least 8 characters
- To make your password stronger you can mix upper and lowercase letters, use numbers and special characters.

An illustration of a tower of treasure in a desert landscape. The tower is made of gold and has a red roof. It is surrounded by sand dunes and a single tree.

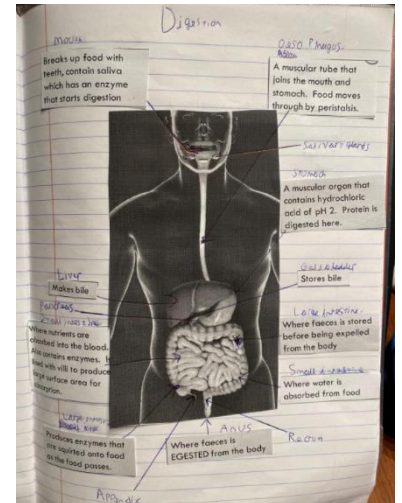
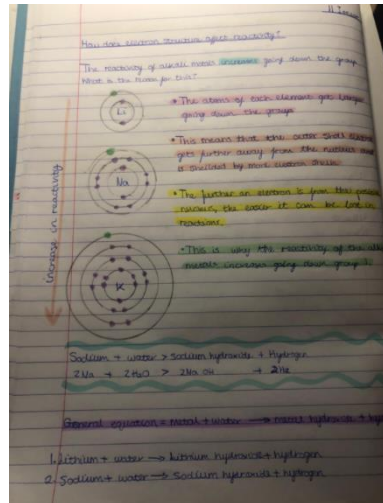
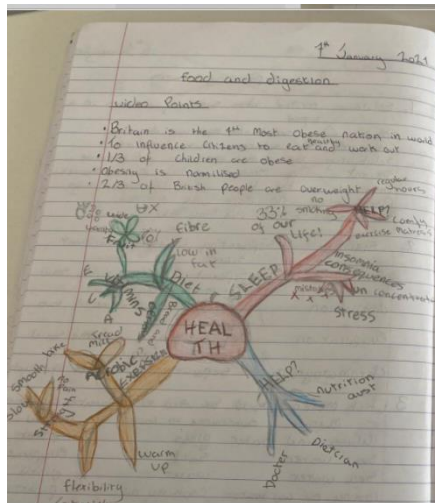
Mindful Mountain think before you share...

Mindful mountain talks about how you can overshare very easily online and you must be weary of whom you talk to and what you share. It tells you what sort of things should be shared with friends, family, public and what what should be kept personal. As it can be dangerous if you share your personal information.

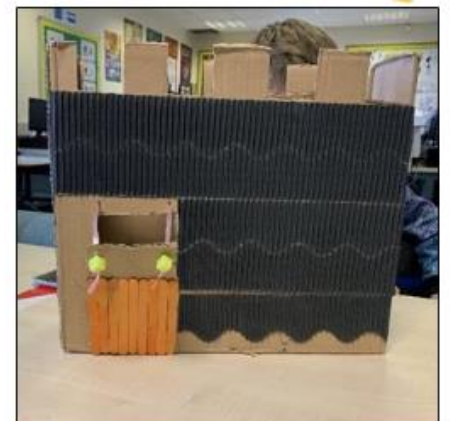
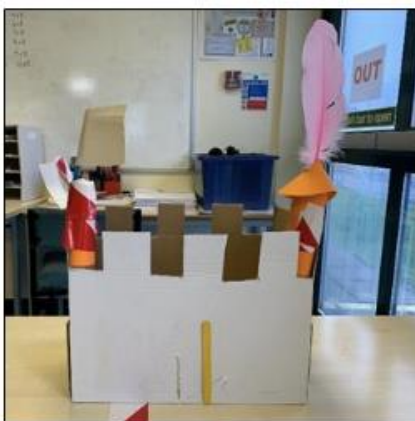
An illustration of a mountain landscape with a path leading to a peak. The path is made of stones and leads up a hill. There are trees and a small building at the base of the mountain.



Science



History



Art





Design Technology



Welsh Baccalaureate

Rhys Anthony in Year 9 has run 5k every day in January for the charity Velindre as part of his studies raising over £500! Well done Rhys, we are all very proud of your resilience and energy. What an achievement!



Our older pupils have been through an uncertain time and are understandably worried about the next few months and their future grades at BTEC, GCSE, AS and A level. With Centre Determined Grades now confirmed once again for this year it is more important than ever that they continue to complete their work to the very best of their ability so that we can see their true talents and achievements.

Our youngest pupils have had an intermittent start to their time at Bryntirion and have proved amazingly resilient and resourceful. They have certainly embodied the 'Value of the Month' for February in their creativity and we look forward to seeing even more of this in Eisteddfod themed work after half term for years 7 – 9. More details of this will follow in lessons when we return.

As well as academic work, we have of course been concerned with the wellbeing of our pupils and had a very successful and timely 'Wellbeing Wednesday' on February 3rd. We were very envious of the fantastic baking going on and encouraged, once again, by the resourcefulness and creativity of our pupils; they really embraced the day and we were glad to hear all about their activities and loved the photos! There are more on the school social media accounts but here is a selection:



Whilst it is an unfortunate necessity to use laptops and electronic gadgets for a large part of each working day at the moment, we have tried to encourage as much physical activity as possible to keep everyone fit and healthy. The PE department have taken part in a Six Nations virtual race to the stadiums; an inter-school competition between Bryntirion, Chepstow, Cwmtawe and Monmouth Comprehensive Schools, as well as CCYD. The challenge involved Year 7 & 8 pupils plus staff from the five schools. The participants had to record their daily exercise and send their distances to a member of staff in the PE department. The daily exercise could be a walk, run, cycle, row, scooter or skateboard. Basically, anything! The aim was to travel virtually to all of the Six Nations Stadiums following the route below and the good news is we made it to Rome!

THE ROUTE

Start Line: WALES - Principality Stadium, Cardiff

Destination 1: IRELAND - The Aviva Stadium, Dublin (438km)

Destination 2: SCOTLAND - BT Murrayfield Stadium, Edinburgh (465km)

Destination 3: ENGLAND - Twickenham Stadium, London (676km)

Destination 4: FRANCE - Stade de France, Paris (491km)

Finish Line: ITALY - Stadio Olimpico, Rome (1430km)

Total: 3500km



SIX NATIONS VIRTUAL RACE TO THE STADIUMS!

AN INTER-SCHOOL LOCKDOWN CHALLENGE BETWEEN KS3 & STAFF!



At this moment in time we don't know anything about the re-opening of the school; we look forward to more information being released on February 19th by the Welsh Assembly Government. We will continue to plan for a return to distance learning on Monday, February 22nd and will keep you informed as the situation changes. In the meantime please enjoy a well-deserved rest over the half term holiday and accept our very sincere thanks for your support. We could not achieve the amazing things we do at Bryntirion without working together with our families and community. We hope you know that whether it is in person or from a distance, we will continue to do our very best for your children.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Pawar', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R. Pawar

Headteacher