

27th March 2020

Dear all

As we navigate these very anxious times, I believe it is more important than ever to keep in touch, to feel connected to one another and to share stories. You will have received various communications relating to wellbeing and activities, and information about home working, and we will continue to keep in regular contact through various channels. We are also trying to respond to every query and request from pupils and parents, and Heads of Year have been in contact with many pupils during the course of the week, simply to check in.

The first of this update part will consider how we can all adjust to a very different way of working for the next few weeks and possibly months. In the second part update, I will share some of the activities that took place in the week leading up to the closure of schools, and also some of the stories of the week so far.

The week beginning Monday 23rd March 2020

As we have moved towards distance learning, we have all been adjusting to a very unfamiliar way of living this week. The speed at which this virus has encroached on our lives has not allowed all school communities the time we would have liked to fully prepare for the move to online and remote learning. We know there have been a few teething problems with accessing online materials, but generally things have gone very well. For pupils in Year 7 and Year 8, ClassCharts has been very successful as a means of communication so far, and further developments will follow. TEAMS has been a superb means of creating a repository of resources and a means of communication, which nearly everyone has taken advantage of.

I would like to thank our caring and conscientious teachers preparing and sharing the resources; it was a huge effort in a very short period of time. We really do, however, appreciate that this has been a great deal for many of our students to cope with, and are thinking of different ways of supporting pupils who will be struggling either to access this learning, or working in ways which are so new to them.

It's been business as usual for all our staff, either working in at home or at other settings. School has been open for a variety of reasons, and the site staff, cleaners, catering team, and admin and IT staff have been working either in school or at home to ensure the school continues to function. It is also been a bewildering and anxious time for them, and they are doing an amazing job! Other members of staff have been asked by the local authority volunteer to help in our community; they are doing so in great numbers, and are much appreciated.

We will continue to provide you with updates on homeworking, and direct you to new and relevant materials where needed.

Looking after wellbeing

The first priority for all members of our school community is wellbeing. This is a stressful and difficult situation for all age groups to adjust to. Therefore, the main aim this week is to focus on mind and body.

What does wellbeing look like when isolating at home? Rather than starting with individual academic study, let's start with body and activity. And let's start with ways that each individual can connect with the wider community in order to feel less isolated.

A good starting point that we fully recommend is launching your weekdays by streaming **Joe Wicks on his YOUTUBE channel**. This is a good way to start the day with the Body Coach and his live streaming PE lesson at 9 am (Monday to Friday). Perfect for getting the whole family moving together! A fabulous way to boost the body and the brain for the rest of the day.

Also, keep a daily check on our Bryntirion Comp Twitter feed. We will be providing good news stories, pictures and updates for everyone as usual. Mrs Hawkes has contacted everyone to send us in any examples of things children have been doing at home, and tagging us into any twitter message you are able to post.

In the meantime, we will keep in contact with you via twitter, email and sometimes telephone.

Keeping busy everyone (pupils!)

Next, think about what you are eating and drinking. Home education is not just about academic studies. It may now be an opportunity to develop your culinary skills. First you need to assess your baseline. What can you currently do? If you already know how to boil an egg, maybe push yourself to master the art of the omelette. The key message here is that you have the opportunity in the coming months to focus on the skills that you will need for life. Cooking, cleaning, laundry, meal planning, gardening.

Your day won't be structured by bells and routines in the normal sense but having a routine that suits your family life will help. Look at the subjects that you are studying and make a sensible schedule for the week. Your teachers do not want you to be idle. Neither do we want any student to be stressed. We want to keep your brains ticking over. We want to support you to develop more independent study skills.

Some of you will benefit by immersing yourselves for 2 or 3 hours a day in the work set for you; others may find it more useful to look at the work provided for you by their teachers, and then organise their time around their timetable.

Take care this week, and continue to keep communicating.

RK Pawar

RK Pawar



Geography Volcano Cakes

Students in Year 8 have been busy making some creative volcanoes as part of their Geography coursework.



Oliver Davies – Future is Bright Award

Congratulations to Year 9 pupil Oliver Davies for winning 'The Future is Bright Award' at the Bridgend Inspire Life Awards. This award recognises Oliver's huge contribution to health & wellbeing as a young carer to his family & his impact on the wider community.



Velindre Enterprise and Employability Skills Challenge

On 4th March thousands of change-makers packed the SSE Arena, Wembley, for an unparalleled event. A-list celebrities, inspiring speakers and world leaders, mixed with real people, celebrated a year of action that transformed communities and changed lives. Our students were invited to this amazing event following their recent success in the Velindre Enterprise and Employability Skills Challenge and our Bryntirion Dragons' Den Grand Final, where the students had developed a new product or service to support the charity. During WE Day, our students had the incredible privilege of going back stage at Wembley where they had the exciting opportunity to meet performers and speakers, including Lewis Hamilton, Idris Elba, Jamie Oliver, Leona Lewis, Calum Scott, and, the cast of Game of Thrones – to name just a few!



Science Club

As part of British Science Week 2020 the Science Department have been busy looking how biodegradable plastic can be.



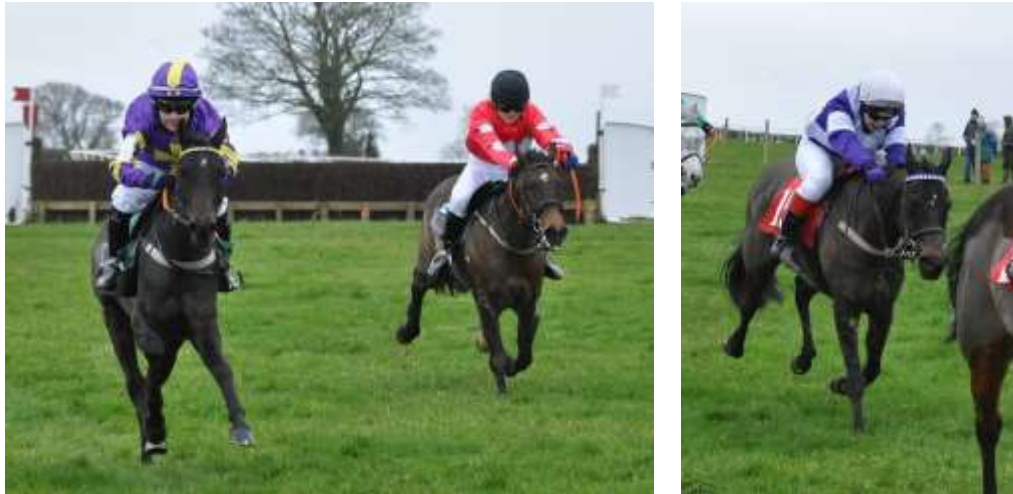
Masterclass Events

Pupils from primary feeder schools have been working with departments in an enrichment day. This included pupils involved with music drama, art and digital media.



Sport

Well done to pupils Mason Paetel and Megan Ridsdale who both won their respective races at a recent horseracing event.



Well done to some of our pupils who were selected and played in the Bridgend schools football team with a 3-0 victory in the Welsh School FA Cup against Caerphilly schools team.



Fantastic effort by Osian Yardley, who represented Glamorgan Valleys in the Welsh Schools Cross Country Championships in Brecon recently.



Global Choices Conference

Sixth Form students recently held a Global Choices Conference. They responded passionately to a variety of global issues on the themes of health, food and shelter, population, transport, economy and natural environment. Congratulations to all students who contributed.



Welsh Blood Service

A big thank you to the Welsh Blood Service who recently visited our school where many of our staff and Sixth Form donated blood.



Ospreys' Disability Six Nations

Smiles all round at the second Ospreys' Disability Six Nations at Llandarcy which featured many of our students. Here's a shot of Year 7 pupil Adam Craven.

