



October 26th, 2023

Our reference: October half term 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to provide a brief update as we approach the middle of the Autumn Term. I know pupils and staff are looking forward to a well-deserved short break after such a busy first few weeks of the school year. As you will be aware we end the half term with an INSET for staff on Friday 27th October, and will return on Monday 6th November.

A - November Exams and Tests

GCSE examinations will take place for most pupils in Year 11 after half term. All pupils are aware of these and have been given individual timetables. The examinations are as follows:

- Monday 6th November - GCSE English Unit 2
- Tuesday 7th November - GCSE Maths/Numeracy Unit 1
- Wednesday 8th November - GCSE English Unit 3
- Thursday 9th November - GCSE Maths/Numeracy Unit 2
- Monday 13th November - GCSE Maths Unit 1
- Wednesday 15th November - GCSE Maths Unit 2

I would be grateful if you would discuss the individual examination arrangements with your child and ensure that they are properly equipped in readiness for each exam. Please note that the following equipment is necessary for mathematics examinations:

- Black pen
- Pencil
- Ruler
- Protractor
- A pair of compasses
- A scientific calculator.

Pupils in Years 7 and 8 will be taking National Reading Tests during the first two weeks after half term.

B - Parents' Evenings

There is one parents' evening planned for the second part of the Autumn half term. This is for parents of pupils in **Years 12 and 13** and will take place on Thursday 14th December in person at the school. Details and invitations will take place prior to the evening.

I would like to thank Year 11 parents for your attendance at parents' evening on Thursday 19th October. We will host a further meeting in January 2024 for parents of



pupils in Year 11 with members of the Senior Leadership Team. This will be to discuss progress towards targets. All other parents' evenings take place in 2024 as follows:

Year 7 – Thursday 14th March

Year 8 – Thursday 21st March

Year 9 – Thursday 9th May

Year 10 – Thursday 18th January

C – Information for Year 8 pupils regarding GCSE options

Bryntirion has operated a 3-year GCSE programme for options subjects since 2019. This has meant that pupils have been given the opportunity to choose GCSE options in Year 8. The qualifications system is changing from September 2025 in order to reflect the vision and principles in the new Curriculum for Wales. This will include new approaches, options choices and syllabuses. The intention is for these courses to be studied over a two-year period. The full syllabuses and preparatory resources will not be finalised or published this academic year. Consequently, schools are unable to plan their teaching and learning programmes or prepare their resources until they have sight of these.

We are therefore planning for first teaching of GCSE options subjects in September 2025 rather than in September 2024. We are, however, preparing a transition model for Year 9 which builds on the work undertaken in Years 7 and 8, in readiness for the introduction of new GCSEs in September 2025. There will be further information about this approach shared with parents of pupils in Year 8 during the second part of this Autumn Term

Please see the Autumn Term curriculum intentions for Years 7 and 8 on the school website under the heading 'Letters to Parents'.

D – The Bryntirion Big Bocs

The Bryntirion Big Bocs is a community enterprise aimed at reducing food, clothing and equipment wastage.

Our two new containers will be acting as a community hub for the redistribution of such items. On Thursday 12th October, The Bocs opened for the first time for the redistribution of pre-loved Uniform. We were very busy and redistributed many donated items of uniform, jackets and sports equipment. The Bocs opened again on Thursday 19th October for clothing/uniform, parents were notified.

Thank you to all parents who contributed to the Bryntirion Big Bocs 2000 Food Drive. The aim of this drive was to collect over 2000 long life items such as tins, packets and hygiene items for redistribution to those most in need in our community. We surpassed this initial target with ease thanks to the overwhelming generosity of the school community! As a result, we are going to raffle some of the excess items. All students will be entered into the raffle (no charge) and the winners will receive a full 'bag for life' of donated items. The Bocs will be open from 3.30pm - 4.30pm on



Tuesday 24th, Wednesday 25th and Thursday 26th October for winners to collect their bags.

On Thursday 26th October, we will be opening the Bocs for a Halloween Book Swap. All pupils will have the opportunity to attend the Bocs throughout the course of the school day. Pupils and parents have been asked to bring a book to school that they have enjoyed reading to swap with another pupil for a book that they would like to read,

Thank you to parents who have contributed so generously to the book swap.

We intend to repeat and expand on this social enterprise activity through the year.

D – Attendance

Parents will be aware that a high priority for all schools is to improve attendance. Whilst there has been a notable improvement, we are still some ways below pre-pandemic levels. Please be aware that school will only authorise absence for holidays during term time in exceptional circumstances. Please complete a holiday form well in advance of any planned holiday, setting out any such individually unique circumstances.

Thank you to parents who have recently been using the Class Charts app to inform school of daily/pending absences. This is a very useful way of communicating to the attendance team who can immediately note and record absences.

E – Re-Set Standards Assemblies

At the end of each half term, pupils attend reward assemblies with Heads of Year and Senior Staff. This is an opportunity to celebrate pupils' efforts and achievements together and are a lovely way to end the half term period. The new half term begins with 'Re-set Standards' assemblies. In November, one focus will be on punctuality in the morning and lateness to lessons. We will also be revisiting what it means to be 'Ready, Respectful and Safe' at Bryntirion.

We are introducing a more 'restorative approach' to sanctions after half term. Associated with this will be some changes to language and terms that we will be introducing to pupils as follows:

- **'Check in'** – this is a brief restorative conversation with a class teacher during or following a lesson.
- **Level 1 & 2 – 'Call back'** – This restorative conversation will take place at break or lunch. Please note that in following these meetings there will be time for pupils to have refreshment at break and lunch as usual
- **Level 3 – 'Reflection'** – this is a more significant sanction with a Head of Department or Head of Year. It would last for 30 minutes and take place after school.



- **Level 4 – SLT (Senior Leadership Team) detention** on either Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday for 60 minutes after school. This sanction would be for more serious disciplinary incidents, and would involve a more extended restorative conversation.

We would be grateful for the support of parents in reinforcing these messages at home.

Finally, I hope you enjoy a pleasant half term break, and thank you once again for your support during the Autumn Term.

Yours sincerely



R K Pawar – Headteacher

