YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
A fo ben bid bont

Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

22nd March 2024

Dear parent/carer

I hope you are well. After what feels like two minutes since we returned after the half term break, we are now on the final day before the Easter holiday.

At the end of each term, we often say 'farewell' to some staff, with this end of term being no exception as 6 staff are leaving us for pastures new. It is important to recognise that at the end of today, a combined total of over **77** years of service to Brynteg will be walking out of the door and so I feel it is only right to devote the whole of this letter to this.

Leaving us today are:

Libby Wright who has been with us for the past 2 years as part of our humanities cluster and has made a real impact in her short time with us.

Lily Dawkin who has spent 3 years at Brynteg as an Assistant Year Leader and is currently part of the year 7 team. She joined us from Neath Port Talbot but is now moving on to a different career with Admiral. I know so many of the pupils who she has built up excellent relationships with will miss her.

Adam Groves, our IT technician, joined us five years ago. He was faced with being the only IT technician working with a network that was seriously out-of-date, but he managed to make such an impact. Adam is moving on to a role within the Senedd, where he will be putting his superb IT skills to use.

Ruth D'Adamo has been part of our support staff team for 29 years. In that time she has performed a range of roles within the school such as cleaner, dinner supervisor and food technology technician. Amongst many other things, pupils will be wondering who will now blow the whistle on the fields to signify the end of lunch break?

Kerry Roberts is leaving us after 18 years also to enjoy a well-earned retirement. Kerry has also undertaken a number of roles at the school including cleaner and more recently supporting in our Sixth Form Centre where our pupils will tell you her providing our pupils with her legendary toast, tea and words of wisdom and support. You also may have met Kerry in the bus bay at the end of the day where, in all weathers, she ensures that every single pupil is safely on the bus (and often paying herself when pupils have not had enough money for the bus fare).

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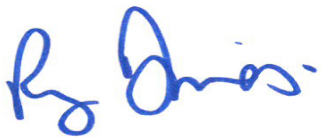
Website: www.bryntegschool.co.uk Twitter: @bryntegschool Facebook: Brynteg School

Matt Copp has been part of Brynteg for 23 years. He joined us as a student teacher and found it so hard to leave he became a member of staff in September 2001. He has been a key part of the science team in school and has taught pupils in all year groups. His passion for pastoral care led him to becoming an assistant year leader before taking on the position of Year Leader in 2015. Currently he is Head of Year 10 and I know his year group will all miss him (perhaps not the extra-long assemblies). Mr Copp is leaving us to continue his teaching in his beloved home town of Swansea.

I am sure you will join with me in wishing all of the colleagues who are leaving us today well, thanking them for their amazing service to the Brynteg community and good luck for their lives beyond our school.

It might have been a short term but it has been one which has been incredibly successful with so much to celebrate. Thank you to you as parent and carers for the support you have shown us and to our wonderful pupils, a huge 'well done' and I look forward to seeing you all on Monday 8th April.

Best wishes



Headteacher

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YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
A fo ben bid bont

Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

15th March 2024

Dear parent/carer

'No school can work well for children if parents (carers) and teachers do not act in partnership on behalf of the children's best interests' – Dorothy Cohen.

As you are aware, there has been a lot of social media attention regarding some of our work this week on social media, and I won't repeat what I said in my previous letter apart from encouraging you to talk to us should you be concerned about any aspect of our provision at all. Thank you to everyone who offered us support during this time.

Something happens between primary and secondary school, which means we become more distant from parents and carers. However hard we try with letters such as these, parent/carer evenings and so on, the link between school and home is not as close as that experienced in primary schools. There are probably many reasons for this, but perhaps it is the size of the secondary school combined with the fact that you are expected to liaise with so many members of staff that makes it feel unwelcoming.

Having less contact with parents and carers is a concern, and there are so many ways in which we are trying to offer opportunities to help bridge this gap. For example, in the last few weeks, some of the opportunities which have been offered to parents and carers are as follows:

Last night we held our 'Curriculum Showcase' event where our year 7 and 8 pupils had the opportunity to share their learning with parents and carers.
Mrs Mackie held a meeting with parents and carers to discuss the new curriculum model
I held an Open Meeting with parents and carers
Eisteddfod concert
Parent/carer evenings for 9,10,12 (11 next week)

I would welcome any ideas you may have regarding creating more opportunities for school and home to work together and indeed, how we can improve our current opportunities. Having an effective partnership between us is essential to ensuring that all pupils get the best possible experience at Brynteg. Please do not hesitate to contact me (ryan.davies@bryntegschool.bridgend.cymru) should you wish to discuss this further.

Best wishes

Headteacher

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YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
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Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

8th March 2024

Dear parent/carer and pupils

'The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say, 'The children are now working as if I did not exist.' –Maria Montessori

Thank you for your support during our Professional Learning Day on Tuesday. The day focused on literacy, numeracy and digital competence skills and how all staff (regardless of their subject discipline) have an important role in helping our pupils to develop these.

We are so proud of the work we have done in developing our new curriculum model, which, at the moment, is embedded into years 7 and 8 and will move into year 9 in September. One of the strengths of the new approach is the fact staff have been able to identify the content which they feel is important to them at Brynteg School. Being in control of the curriculum in this way has also meant that we have been able to ensure that the development of skills is a key part of this model and not simply an 'add on'.

What we are increasingly finding with our pupils in year 7 and year 8 is that, not only are they developing the skills and acquiring the essential knowledge as highlighted in our model but they are also increasingly becoming independent, resilient learners which is something I know employers and universities have been asking for many years. They highlight the following skills which they say are essential to anyone moving into the world of work in the near future:

Communication	being able to understand others and communicate effectively
Problem-solving skills	being able to identify a problem and working to find a solution to it
Adaptability to change	the ability to quickly and successfully embrace change and adapt effectively in response to it
Initiative	the ability to be resourceful and work without always being told what to do. It requires **resilience** and **determination**

Schools have proven over the years that they can prepare pupils for exams and many of these have gone on to be incredibly successful. However, feedback has been that there has always been something missing as these pupils go on to access employment/education opportunities.

What we are seeing with our new curriculum model is that our pupils are developing their communication, problem solving, adaptability and initiative skills. What is so exciting is tha these pupils are continually demonstrating that they are determined, resilient learners and I honestly believe that this is giving them the best possible preparation for life beyond school.

Seeing our year 7 and 8 pupils at work, it can, at times, feel as if we, as staff, do not 'exist' (as mentioned in the Maria Montessori quote above) and perhaps this is the best possible feedback we can have about our new learning and teaching model!

Best wishes

Headteacher

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Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

1st March 2024

Dydd Gwyl Dewi Hapus!

"It's the teacher that makes the difference, not the classroom." –Michael Morpurgo

This quote is so true. The only change I would make to it is to say it is **all staff** in school, not just teachers, who have the ability to inspire and enthuse pupils. In a school such as Brynteg, there are so many examples of teachers and support staff creating wonderful learning opportunities for pupils in buildings that, quite frankly, are not fit for 21st Century learning. Driving past our school and looking at the grand buildings surrounded by beautiful fields and trees would give the impression that the learning spaces and other facilities are equally as outstanding. Nothing could be further from the truth, and whilst staff (especially our brilliant premises team) have all worked hard over the years to make the best out of our situation, this is proving to be increasingly difficult.

If you then consider that this week, we were told (as were all schools in Bridgend) that we would receive a 3% cut in our 2024-25 budget, which, for us, represents a reduction in our available finance of around £250,000. A reduction of this magnitude is bound to make an impact on us as a school and I know that governors are preparing for some extremely difficult decisions in the coming months. What is apparent is that to ensure that pupils have access to the staff that they need to make a difference in the classroom then, other plans will have to be put on hold – for example, the work that we had intended to do in terms of developing our classrooms and site, the funding of extra-curricular activities and so on. These things will have to be decided by the governing body in the coming months, but clearly, there will be an impact in the coming year.

Our staff are amazing and I know there will be an absolute commitment from them to ensuring that there is no impact on the quality of learning and teaching (as they have always done) but I am fully aware of the hidden costs of these cuts too. For example, if there are larger class sizes, while staff will ensure that this will not impact pupils, there is an immediate increase in the amount of planning, preparation, and assessment that they will have to undertake. I don't know if you are aware, but many staff have traditionally taken their own decision to buy resources for their pupils themselves – whilst this is not something which they are directed to do in any way, I would assume that their thoughts will turn to making decisions such as these more and more in the future.

To use another quote, **'A great teacher can teach with a paper clip and literature in an empty field' (Unknown)** – and this is something I have seen repeatedly where those brilliant staff inspire and enthuse pupils often simply by walking into the classroom! However, there comes a time where you can take away so much that it really does make this amazing job of ours so incredibly difficult and it is only the commitment and dedication of our staff which ensures that the incredibly important task of developing the outstanding citizens of the future continues unhindered.

All I hope is that there is recognition of the impact of the cuts and the work that Brynteg and all schools are doing to avoid these impacting negatively on pupils. Being in the privileged position of having daily contact with our pupils, I know how bright the future is for them – with the appropriate level of resourcing, this future could be brighter still.

Best wishes

Headteacher

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Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

23rd February 2024

I believe that teaching is the best and most important job in the world. There is nothing quite like it, with no two days or no two lessons ever being the same. Yes, there are times when there are challenges and things do not go according to plan (the extremely wet Wednesday we just had is a case in point), but I am sure this is true in all jobs! Being a teacher for over 35 years has undoubtedly had those times that have been testing, but the highs far outweigh any difficult days.

Having access to inspirational teachers and support staff myself made such impact on and convinced me from a very early age that teaching was the career for me. I was so lucky to be surrounded by many incredible teachers and support staff who convinced me to have confidence in my abilities and opened my eyes to many opportunities and experiences.

I wonder how many of you remember those teachers or support staff who really made a positive difference to your time in school? I still remember Mr and Mrs James, who were the most amazing music teachers at my secondary school. I am not a talented musician by any means, but I attribute my lifelong love of music to their talent, enthusiasm and energy. When Mr. and Mrs. James taught you, their love of their subject and passion for teaching shone through, and I enjoyed every moment in their classes.

Not only did they develop my love for music, but they also became mentors to me, guiding me through my time in secondary school, where they often had to highlight to me how I could be making the wrong choices. It was only after beginning my teaching career that I came to appreciate that, as well as being incredibly passionate teachers of music, the fact that they did genuinely care about every single pupil made them stand out as outstanding teachers.

It was Mr James who convinced me to audition for the Mid Glamorgan Youth Orchestra, which resulted in me attending numerous music courses (at the now-defunct Ogmore Residential Centre) and performing in venues across the county. This experience and the friendships I made during this time have stayed with me; had it not been for my music teachers, this would never have happened. I owe them so much.

As a teacher, I have tried to model myself on the staff, such as Mr. and Mrs. James, who were so crucial to my time in school. In the early days of my career, I quickly realised how difficult it is to balance the demands of being a highly effective teacher with recognising and supporting pupils' individual needs – and how easy excellent teachers such as Mr. and Mrs. James made it look! Now, as a Headteacher, one of the most important parts of my role is to ensure that every single pupil feels that we care about them, we treat them as individuals and that they have access to learning opportunities which inspires and enthuses them – and seeing this in action at Brynteg is always the highlight of the week for me.

Sadly, Mr. and Mrs. James are no longer with us, but I would like to think that they would recognise their influence on both me as a teacher and in the work being done in Brynteg School. For me, the following Japanese Proverb sums up the impact that staff in school had on me in my time in school, and indeed, I know this is the case in Brynteg now:

'Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher.'

Have a good weekend.

Headteacher

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YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
A fo ben bid bont

Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

9th February 2024

Dear parent/carer

Wednesday was an important day for us at Brynteg as we held the official opening ceremony of our new all-weather pitch which has replaced the infamous 'red-gra'. The new facility will mean that our pupils will be able to play/train throughout the year. Now that the pitch is open it is going to be used solely by our pupils until Easter time in order for us to familiarise ourselves with the management of the facility. After Easter, the facility will be open to community groups after school hours and if you are interested in booking this, please contact the school at the following email address - **brynteghirings@bryntegschool.bridgend.cymru**

The planning for the pitch started a number of years ago when we were informed that an ex-pupil (Harry Gwynne Brown) had bequeathed us a sum of money to be used to develop a facility which could be used by all pupils at the school. In addition to this, BCBC offered to contribute the remainder of the finance as it was recognised that this was an important facility for our school and the wider community. Without the support of the Harry Gwynne Brown Memorial Trust and Bridgend County Borough Council we simply would not have been able to consider such a major development and on behalf of the pupils, staff and governors I would like to thank them for this.

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Thank you to all our guests who helped us to mark this important occasion for Brynteg. A particular thanks to Ella Jackson (Welsh Women's Hockey) who attended and took the opportunity to present Emma Barton (6th form) which her Welsh shirt after being selected for the Welsh National Age Group Squad.

Please remember that from **19th February**, our new **Pupil Support Hub** opens to deal with all pupil queries. There are 3 main ways you can contact the hub:

Pupil Support Hub Referral Form (preferred method)
The form will be open for use from 8am on Monday 19th February and can be accessed using the link below:

https://forms.gle/BWWjNhoKWmsedAb9A

or by scanning the following QR code:

Emailing the Pupil Support Hub

Pupilsupport@bryntegschool.bridgend.cymru

Telephoning the Pupil Support Hub

01656 815559 - choose the 'Pupil Support Hub' option

You will still also have the dedicated option to report an absence in addition to the Pupil Support Hub option.

Thank you to the parents and carers who attended the Open Meeting with the Head session on Wednesday evening. Some of the topics covered were as follows:

- Support for pupils using changing rooms before/after PE lessons
- Possibility of DT/STEM clubs at lunchtime and after school
- Wider range of non-sporting extra-curricular activities
- Funding for school trips and visits and ensuring that those that are able to contribute do so
- Fundraising for activities/resources in school
- Update on the cashless catering system in respect of pupils/parents/carers not being able to view their balances
- Rationale for positioning year 12 reports immediately before the mock examinations

The next Open Meeting will take place on Tuesday 14th May at 5pm and further information will be made available nearer the time. Please remember that you can arrange to meet me on a one-to-one basis should there be anything you wish to discuss that would not be appropriate to do so in the open forum.

YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
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Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

It was good to see so many year 10 parents and carers last night as they attended our parent/carer evening. Whilst last year many parents and carers stated that the move back to attending school in-person was preferrable, some have now asked whether or not we can return to the online meetings. The current situation will not change for the rest of this academic year but I will ask for your feedback again on these evenings for our 2024-5 calendar.

Finally, as this half term draws to a close can I thank you for your support – it has been another fantastic few weeks for us at Brynteg and I am looking forward to all pupils returning on Monday 19th February for an even more successful period before the Easter holiday!

Best wishes

Headteacher

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YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
A fo ben bid bont

Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

2nd February 2024

Dear parent/carer

I hope you and your family are well.

As mentioned in a previous letter, from Monday 19th February we are moving to a new system of dealing with **ALL** pupil queries through our 'Pupil Support Hub'. This will ensure that all queries are dealt with promptly according to the level of need by a team of specialists who are trained in identifying pupil support needs. It is felt that this new development will provide parents and carers with the level of response which has been asked for in recent years whilst, at the same time acknowledging the fact that often members of the pupil support team are unavailable as a result of teaching and other commitments. The changes from February 19th are as follows:

On contacting the school with a pupil query this will be dealt with by a member of the Pupil Support Hub Team. You can contact the Pupil Support Hub in the following ways:

1. Pupil Support Hub Referral Form (preferred method)

By completing on Pupil Support Hub form. This is the preferred method of contact as it will provide us with the information required to give you the most appropriate and efficient level of response. Requests sent using this method will be dealt with immediately. The form will be open for use from 8am on Monday 19th February and can be accessed using the link below:

https://forms.gle/BWWjNhoKWmsedAb9A

or by scanning the following QR code:

Please note that until 8am on Monday 19th February, the message 'this form will no longer accept responses' will appear and you will not be able to submit responses.

2. Emailing the Pupil Support Hub

From Monday 19th February, there will be ONE email account which will be used for all pupil support queries. Whilst you may have sent an email to individual staff in the past, we ask that from this point on you use the following email address as this is the only guarantee that the query will be dealt with promptly:

Pupilsupport@bryntegschool.bridgend.cymru

This email address is monitored throughout the day during school hours by the pupil support team and they will action such requests accordingly.

If you do email, please include all of the information we require in order to deal with your query promptly and efficiently. Again, you may well find it easier to use the Pupil Support Referral Form as in this way you will know that the information we require will have been provided.

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3. Telephoning the Pupil Support Hub

You are still able to contact us by telephone and from Monday 19th February you will be given the option to be transferred to the Pupil Support Hub from the main menu. We ask that, where possible, the telephone line is only used from urgent queries (although it must be stressed that submitting the referral form will be just as quick in terms of response time). To contact the Pupil Support Hub, please use the following number:

01656 815559 - choose the 'Pupil Support Hub' option

You will still also have the dedicated option to report an absence in addition to the Pupil Support Hub option.

Whatever the pupil-related query, we ask that you use the Pupil Support Hub and someone will be on-hand to deal with it. This could be something as straightforward as checking what type of PE kit needs to be brought for lessons on a day, to updating us regarding medical information to issues which are more urgent and require an immediate response.

As mentioned earlier, the feedback that we have received from parents and carers is that you would like a more efficient response to pupil support queries and we feel that the new hub will help us to achieve this. From your part, we ask that you use the pupil support hub as the main method of contacting staff in school – you may well have used individual email addresses and so on in the past but the problem with this has always been queries can only be dealt with when the member of staff is available whereas, with our new arrangement, there will always be a team on hand to deal with you query. Please help us to make this a success by using the Pupil Support Hub for all your pupil-related queries.

Good luck to the pupils in years 11,12 and 13 who will be sitting mock examinations next week. This is a good opportunity for them to get used to working under examination conditions in preparation for the summer. They are 'mock' exams for a reason in that they enable pupils and staff what needs to be done to be ready for the final exams and should be approached in that way.

Finally, we are looking forward to meeting our Year 10 parents and carers next week (8th Feb) as we continue with the return to in-person parent/carer meetings. There have been some alterations to the locations of the meetings with subject teachers following feedback received from the Year 9 meeting a couple of weeks ago and it is hoped that this improves the experience for parents, carers and pupils still further.

Best wishes

Headteacher

YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
A fo ben bid bont

Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

26th January 2024

Dear parent/carer

Thank you to all those who submitted their vote for the parent/carer governor election. I am pleased to announce that the following have been elected as parent/carer governors for Brynteg for the coming 4 years:

Kathryn George
Rea Stephens
Angharad Davies-Shilling

Many congratulations to the successful candidates and a huge 'thank you' to the other parents/carers who expressed an interest in this position.

Governors play a very important role in the life of our school. They are responsible for overseeing aspects such as strategy, policy, budgeting and staffing. They enable our school to run as effectively as possible, working alongside the leadership team and ensuring staff are supported in order to be able to provide excellent learning, teaching and wider opportunities to all pupils.

Governors have to commit to attending governing body meetings which consider issues such as agreeing the school vision, mitigating financial risk and scrutinising educational outcomes. They are also involved in the school community, acting as critical friends to the headteacher and other leaders/staff. Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise from their professional lives to the governing body and our school benefits greatly from working with them.

For your information, the other members of our governing body are:

Category	Name
Community	Ceri Littlewood Cllr Ian Williams David Bolton Sarah Kerrigan Richard Leonard
Local Authority	Linda Lewis **(chair)** Cllr David Unwin **(vice chair)** Cllr Amanda Williams Daniel Esmond Clare Davies
Parent/Carer	Chantel Pearce Pippa Duggan Marion Howell
Staff	Lauren Feeley Zoe Fender Jan Gordon
Headteacher	Ryan Davies
Clerk to the Governors	Simone Delaney
Contact address for Chair and Clerk to Governors	Brynteg School Ewenny Road Bridgend CF31 3ER

One of the key pieces of work for the governing body in the coming months will be trying to come up with a budget which reflects the needs of the school whilst at the same time coping with the severe financial cuts which all schools in Wales will be facing. Some difficult decisions will have to be made in the near future but I know that the governing body will do everything possible to ensure that the school continues to flourish.

If you follow our social media accounts, you will notice many posts relating to the sporting and extra-curricular successes of many of our pupils and these are updated on a daily basis. This week has been particularly positive with our Year 9 rugby team winning the Ospreys Bowl competition and the news that before Christmas Lewis and Jacob Barnes won gold medals in the 200m for their age groups for the South Wales region in the Welsh Indoor Junior League – a huge congratulations to them all. These are just two examples of the many activities which our pupils participate in and (as mentioned earlier) please check our social media feeds regularly for the most up-to-date information.

As mentioned in my last letter, the next 'Open Meeting with the Head' takes place at 5.00pm on Wednesday 7th February. I will take the opportunity to explain some of the exciting developments happening at the school as well as updating you on the impact of the financial cuts which all schools are facing. The majority of the meeting is for you as parents/carers to ask questions in this open forum about any aspect of our provision. I would stress that should you wish to discuss individual cases/concerns with me then I would be more than happy to meet with you separately to do so. **If you are interested in attending, please complete the form on the link below** – an invitation with joining instructions will then be emailed to you nearer the time.

https://forms.gle/X48o9mnijnvfsrQD8

Best wishes

Headteacher

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YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
A fo ben bid bont

Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

19th January 2024

Dear parent/carer

I am writing again to ask for your support if you drive your son/daughter to school. The area outside the school on Ewenny Road and Heol Gam is becoming extremely congested and is now quite dangerous. Not only are cars being parked far too close to the school gates, they are being parked on the yellow zig-zag lines outside school and often across the driveways of our neighbours. Highway Code rule 243 states:

DO NOT stop or park:

- near a school entrance
- anywhere you would prevent access for Emergency Services
- opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space
- opposite a traffic island or (if this would cause an obstruction) another parked vehicle
- where the kerb has been lowered to help wheelchair users and powered mobility vehicles
- in front of an entrance to a property
- on a bend

Sadly, we experience examples of all of the above regularly and **I fear it is only a matter of time before one of our pupils is injured as a result of this behaviour.** Please help us to make the beginning and end of the day safer for all of our pupils, staff and members of the community.

Mock exams take place for years 11, 12 and 13 on the week beginning 5th February and all pupils should now have received their timetable with details of when these are going to take place. This is an extremely important exercise for our pupils in terms of them gaining a 'real' experience of examinations as they begin their preparations for May/June. As well as sitting the exams, part of the process should be experimenting with a revision plan and finding out what works/doesn't work before it is too late and is something that all pupils in years 11,12 and 13 should aim to do in the coming days. If, as parents and carers you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

Our year 8 pupils recently took part in an excellent Humanities Expedition Day at Swansea University. The day allowed our pupils to find out about the impact of World War Two on Swansea and Bridgend as well as allowing them to demonstrate their enterprise skills through a business challenge. Our pupils certainly responded in the most positive of ways with a many excellent comments about their behaviour and attitude. Thank you to the staff who accompanied pupils and a particular thanks to the staff at the university (including Mr David Bolton – one of our governors who lectures at Swansea) and Mr Paul Davies (senior lecturer in business and digital marketing) for providing our pupils which such an valuable experience.

My next 'Open Meeting with the Head' takes place at 5.00pm on Wednesday 7th February. I will take the opportunity to explain some of the exciting developments happening at the school as well as updating you on the impact of the financial cuts which all schools are facing. The majority of the meeting is for you as parents/carers to ask questions in this open forum about any aspect of our provision. I would stress that should you wish to discuss individual cases/concerns with me then I would be more than happy to meet with you separately to do so. **If you are interested in attending, please complete the form on the link below** – an invitation with joining instructions will then be emailed to you nearer the time.

https://forms.gle/X48o9mnijnvfsrQD8

A final reminder that you should have received a copy of the ballot paper for the election of our **parent/carer governors**. Please take the time to read the information about the candidates and submit your vote for these important positions. The ballot papers need to be returned to school by no later than **10am on 23rd January**.

Best wishes

Headteacher

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YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
A fo ben bid bont

Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

12th January 2024

Dear parent/carer

I hope that you are your family had a good Christmas break and can I wish you all a safe and prosperous new year.

The new term is quite short with there only being 5 weeks both before and after the half term break (we break up on Friday 9th February for half term and Friday 22nd March for Easter) as the Easter period falls very early in the calendar this year. At the moment, there is a consultation being undertaken by the Welsh Government which is looking at reshaping the school year from as early as September 2025. Included in the proposals are:

- *Making the October half term break 2 weeks long (starting in October 2025)*
- *Adopting a system whereby the end of the spring term 2-week break would always fall at the start of April with the Good Friday and Easter Monday bank holidays being given should they fall outside the new holiday arrangement (starting in April 2026)*
- *Reducing the summer break to 5 weeks (starting in July 2026)*.

There will be no reduction in teaching time and the number of holidays will remain the same with the proposal simply redistributing time across the academic year.

The consultation closes on 12th February and parents/carers are encouraged to access the link below in order to participate:

https://www.gov.wales/node/58412/respond-online

Already our year 11 pupils have been extremely busy as far as examinations are concerned. On Wednesday, many of them sat their GCSE English paper and their response was extremely positive. On Thursday, those pupils who sat their Maths/numeracy GCSE examination in November received their results which were excellent and really does provide them with a solid platform on which to build as they move towards their final examinations in May. For those that just missed out on the 'C' grade, they quite clearly are so close to achieving the grade and with the support from our fantastic maths team, I am sure they will do well in May.

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In response to feedback received from pupils, parents and carers regarding the communication between school and home regarding pupil issues, a new system has been designed and will come into operation from **Monday 19th February.** The Pupil Support Hub will be a central point for all pupil queries which will then be able to be dealt with promptly and efficiently by the pupil support team. When you feel you need to contact the school, you will be able to contact one central point using one of the following methods:

- An online referral form
- Sending an email to the Pupil Support Hub central email address
- Telephoning the Pupil Support Hub

The hub will be staffed at all times throughout the day and this will ensure that queries that are received will be dealt with promptly. Whilst we will be working as a team on this, the year teams will still play a vitally important part in providing pupil support and will be the team you will link in with after the original referral should this be required. More information will be sent out in the coming weeks including the link to the referral form, details of the pupil support hub email address and so on.

It has been an excellent start to the new term with lots of exciting learning and teaching taking place right across the school. Here you can see some of our year 8 pupils testing out their wind turbine designs which they completed as part of their Science and Technology expedition challenge. This demonstrated quite clearly how much value there is to be had in terms of learning when pupils are able to problem solve in a real way.

A reminder that you should have received a copy of the ballot paper for the election of our **parent/carer governors**. Please take the time to read the information about the candidates and submit your vote for these important positions. The ballot papers need to be returned to school by no later than **10am on 23rd January**.

Best wishes

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Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

21st December 2023

Dear parent/carer

Welcome to the last of my letters for this calendar year at the end of what has been a very successful term.

On Tuesday evening, our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was a wonderful way in which to celebrate Christmas as a school community. The evening was dominated by the talents of our amazing pupils but it must be recognised that without the hard work and dedication of Mrs Fender and her team, this event would not have been possible. Thank you to all the pupils and staff for contributing to such a memorable evening.

We are saying farewell to two colleagues this week:

Mrs Louise Hogan joined Brynteg from St Julian's school in Newport in September 2016 as our Key Stage Four Maths Coordinator. In her time with us she has taught across the age range as well as making a significant contribution to developing the teaching of maths and numeracy at Brynteg. As a form tutor, Mrs Hogan has helped to guide her form groups with a high level of pastoral care. Mrs Hogan was also instrumental in helping us develop the enrichment programme a number of years ago where her yoga sessions always proved popular with our pupils. She is moving on to a role outside schools but one where she will still utilise her wide range of skills by supporting adult learners develop their maths and numeracy and I am sure that she will make a significant impact in her new career.

Ms Katie Martin has only been with us a short time and has decided to relocate to another part of the UK in order to be closer to her family. As a computer science specialist her skills are in great demand and I am sure that she will move on and be successful in a new role in the very near future.

On behalf of the pupils, staff, and governors at Brynteg I would like to wish both colleagues well and thank them for their contributions to our school.

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Over the last few days a number of our pupils participated in a visit to Cologne in Germany, where they will were able to take part in Design and Technology related activities. There were excursions to the Mercedes Benz Sprinter factory, the Red Dot Design Museum in Essen and the Concept Chocolaterie in Brussels, where they discovered how the crafts-people work and were able to taste the flavours of their caraques and pralines.

During their time in Cologne, pupils also had the opportunity to visit the wondeful Christmas markets. At the markets pupils had the chance to try traditional German cuisine as well as having the chance to discover various handmade Design and Technology.

Thank you to the pupils who in terms of their attitude and behaviour on the visit, really did help to make it a success and I am sure they will have many positive memories of their time in Germany. When pupils reminisce about their time in school it is often experiences such as these which have left a lasting impression.

I would also like to thank the staff who gave up their time to support this visit – at Brynteg I am constantly amazed by the fact that so many staff are committed to offering opportunities such as these for our pupils and it really is such a strength of our school .

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Last Wednesday, a number of our Year 12pupils visited Jesus College Oxford. They met current university students and lecturers who gave them some very deep matters to contemplate. They also went on a scavenger hunt around the city and took advantage of some of the many culinary delights offered. Finally, they engaged in workshops giving advice on how to make a successful application.

The team at Jesus College shared how impressed they were with the way our pupils embraced the day. Once again, they have made us proud.

School opens again on Monday 8th January and I look forward to seeing all of our pupils again and discovering what 2024 brings for us as a school.

Thank you for your support this year. Brynteg is a wonderful school and it is the whole of the school community (of which you are an important part) that makes it so. To you and your families, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Best wishes

Headteacher

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Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

15th December 2023

Dear parent/carer

I hope you have had a good week.

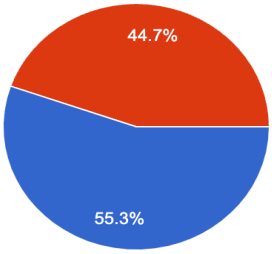
Thank you to the **795** parents/carers who responded to the recent consultation on certain aspects of our school uniform. The information (along with feedback from pupils and staff) was presented to governors last week and their responses are included below.

Skirts/Trousers

Two options were presented:

Continue with skirts as part of the uniform but they must be no shorter than 10cm above the knee
No skirts with all pupils wearing full-length grey trousers (no denim/sports material eg leggings)

Parent/carer response



Governing Body Response

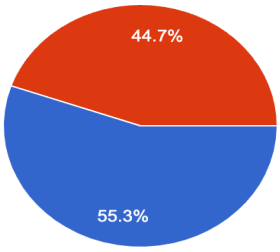
Continue to allow skirts to be worn in September 2024 but to inform pupils, parents and carers that there is the option to move to trousers only with one term's notice should there be further concerns about inappropriate length

Upper School Tie

Option was to remove the upper school tie with pupils wearing the same tie throughout the 5 years

Agree **Disagree**

Parent/carer response



Governing Body Response

Continue with the arrangement as it is (tie changes in year 10/11) after considering the responses from pupils and staff as well

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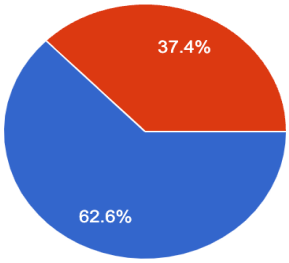
Pullovers

Option to be able to wear a plain pullover from September 2024

Agree **Disagree**

Parent carer response



Governing Body Response

Agreed to allow plain navy pullovers in Years 7-11 from September 2024. We are investigating options for parents/carers to purchase 'iron-on' badges should they wish to do so

There were a number of additional comments made regarding PE kit and governors made the following decisions:

- Emphasise to all parents and carers that the purchase of Brynteg branded black shorts is **optional** and plain black shorts are perfectly acceptable
- **No requirement** for pupils who are studying the GCSE PE/BTEC Sport courses in years 10/11 to purchase additional Brynteg branded kit

Thank you for such an overwhelming response to this consultation and I hope that you can see how your feedback has been taken into account when making these decisions (as well as the feedback from pupils and staff). This consultation deliberately focused on a small number of uniform items as it was felt that a wholesale change would not be appropriate during these challenging economic times. A further consultation regarding other aspects of school life will be sent out after the Christmas period and it is hoped to have another fantastic response.

Our final week of term will be quite busy with a number of activities taking place. Our carol service takes place on Tuesday 19th December, 7pm St Mary's Nolton and all are welcome – please arrive early to reserve your seat! Our Christmas dinner will be served Wednesday 20th and it would be good to see as many of our pupils as possible supporting this to recognise the amazing work that has been done by our catering team. Of course, there are many other activities planned which will all help us to celebrate the end of a long and busy term and which makes next week something for all to look forward to.

Please remember that we break up for Christmas on **Thursday 21st December** at 3.20pm with Friday 22nd being a staff training day.

Best wishes

Headteacher

YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
A fo ben bid bont

Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

8th December 2023

Dear parent/carer

I hope you have had a good week.

Thank you to all those parents and carers who attended our Curriculum Showcase event last night. This is an opportunity to see first-hand the learning which has been undertaken by pupils in years 7 and 8 as part of our new curriculum model. Our Expedition Days set challenges for pupils (such as the one you see in the photograph below) and the showcase event allowed parents and carers to observe the wide range of learning evidence which pupils have through these.

In the photograph above you can see one of our brilliant year pupils trying out the robotic arm which they had to design using levers, the challenge being that the arm had to be able to be used in an operating theatre. The arm had to be effective enough to move a heart into the dummy and after a great deal of trial and error, pupils demonstrated that they were able to complete this operation successfully – a fantastic demonstration of the curriculum bringing learning to life!

We are extremely proud of our new curriculum model but are always looking to make improvements as this develops over the years. One area which we are focussing on is parent/carer involvement in the learning process; whilst the Curriculum Showcase events offer an excellent means of sharing learning we would like to develop a model where parents and carers have the opportunity to contribute to the learning process as it develops. We will consult on this in the new year and would very much like to have your input.

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BARC Community Outreach Centre, Bridgend are offering free hampers for Christmas to those families in need of support. If you wish to access this, please contact: Bridgend community outreach centre 01656 451446.

To book your hamper, you have to ring today (Friday). If you successfully book a hamper, please note these are to be collected between 10 am-2 pm on December 21st.

Next week we return to face-to-face parent/carer evenings for the first time since the pandemic. We start with year 13 and think that the timing of this is just right as these pupils begin the process the planning of their revision for the next 6 months. Our staff are looking forward to meeting parents and carers in this way again and whilst the online system had many advantages and served a purpose at the time, I think we would all agree that the return to the face-to-face situation is so much better.

Other parent/carer evenings are as follows:

Year 9	Thursday 18th January 2024
Year 10	Thursday 8th February 2024
Year 12	Thursday 22nd February 2024
Year 11	Thursday 21st March 2024
Year 7	Thursday 18th April 2024
Year 8	Thursday 9th May 2024

Have a good weekend.

Best wishes

Headteacher

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Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

1st December 2023

Dear parent/carer

I hope you have had a good week.

It was good to see so many pupils, parents and carers at our Sixth Form Open Evening last night (despite the cold temperature). This is the first stage in the important process of choosing courses and I hope that all who attended found the information they needed. Should you have any more questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at school.

As you are aware, all year groups in the school have adopted a charity this year and exciting plans have been made in order to raise much needed funds for these. This week and also in the coming weeks, pupils will be involved as follows:

Tuesday 28th November - year 13 visited the Princess of Wales Hospital Children's Ward to arrange Christmas decoration painting
Thursday 30th November - year 11 sold tea/coffee during the Sixth Form Open Evening as part of their fundraising for the Samaritans
Saturday 9th December - year 8 sponsored walk in aid of Porthcawl RNLI from Kenfig Nature Reserve to Porthcawl RNLI station.
Sunday 10th December - year 9 will be carol singing to raise funds for Llamau at St David's 2 Cardiff
Thursday 14th December - year 13 parent/carer evening - year 12 will be selling tea/coffee for children's ward at the Princess of Wales hospital
Wednesday 20th December 6.30-8.30- year 7 Christmas disco at school - to raise funds for Welsh Refugee Council

Here is the design for the bag completed by some of our sixth form pupils – the bag will be used to store essential items for patients/parents/carers who find themselves in the position of having to stay overnight at the hospital.

A huge thank you to Mrs Reardon and the pupils for making such a positive start on this important link with the hospital.

This is the first year for us to adopt this approach whereby year groups have adopted individual charities and, as always, our pupils have really risen to the occasion. It seems as though even during these incredibly challenging economic times, pupils are still able to think about supporting others. Thank you to you as parents and carers in advance for your support as I am aware that family and friends are so important to our charity work in school.

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I have been asked to share the following information form BARC (Bridgend Community Outreach Centre – 13 Ewenny Road). Barc are kindly offering a free Christmas dinner and Christmas gift to anyone in the community (individuals, families and groups are welcome). The dinner will take place on Friday 22nd December at BARC and booking is essential. If you are interested please call 01656 451 446 as soon as possible to book a place.

Our Curriculum Showcase evenings were a huge success last year with the first of the new academic year taking place on Thursday 8th December from 3.30pm in our Languages (lower school) hall. The event allows pupils to display their learning from the Expedition Days which they have undertaken since September and if last year is anything to go by, this will be another evening full of impressive examples of work. Please remember that as this event now covers both years 7 and 8 parking will be extremely limited and we urge you to consider not bringing a car to the event if at all possible.

There are only a few days left for you to share your thoughts on proposed changes to the uniform. The form really does only take a few moments to complete and includes an opportunity for you to share your thoughts on any aspect of school uniform/PE kit which is not covered by some of the earlier more focussed questions.

The parent/carer questionnaire can be accessed by clicking on the following link:

https://forms.gle/EkXchvT7eP6fhqDK9

The pupil questionnaire can be accessed by clicking on the following link:

https://forms.gle/UrvdgYc8hEGgoxjw6

Responses have to be received by 3.30pm on Monday 4th December.

Thank you for your support.

Headteacher

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YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
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Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

24th November 2023

Dear parent/carer

I hope you have had a good week.

As we approach the final few weeks of term I would like to remind you of the importance of good attendance right up until the last day (Thursday 21st December). This applies to all pupils but particularly those who are preparing for examinations as it is crucial that all the time available is used productively (remembering that mock examinations start just 4 weeks after we return to school in January). Can I urge you to check Classcharts regularly with a particular focus on attendance and let us know as soon as possible if you would like to query anything about the data you find there.

As mentioned last week, our wonderful sixth form art pupils are exhibiting their work at the Bauhaus coffee shop (9 Wyndham Street). You still have time to see their work and I can promise you won't be disappointed – it would also be good to support one of our local businesses.

Many congratulations to the pupils who have worked so hard to create such a wonderful display of work. Thank you to the staff from our brilliant art team who have supported our pupils and given up so much of their time to make this happen.

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Our new flood-lit multi-use playing surface is nearing completion and seeing the final blue/green 'carpet' being laid this week has really generated a lot of excitement in the school. When complete, the facility will offer our pupils the ability to play and train on a surface which is much better suited to their needs.

There have been a number of approaches from local clubs/groups who wish to hire the facility after-school and at weekends and this is something which we wish to support as part of our commitment to developing sport and healthy activity in the community. However, in the first few months, we intend to learn how to use the facility ourselves before offering the opportunity to community groups. If you are interested in booking the facility in the future then please send your details to Kirsten Willis-O'Brien (kirsten.willis-obrien@bryntegschool.bridgend.cymru) at the school who will then contact you nearer the time when the facility becomes available.

Finally, I started by referring to the end of this term and will end with some of the key dates from the first half term after Christmas:

Monday 8th January	School Opens after Christmas
Thursday 18th January	Year 9 Parent/Carer Evening
Friday 26th January	Year 10 Progress Report sent home
Friday 2nd February	Year 12 Progress Report sent home
Monday 5th February +	Years 11, 12 and 13 mock examinations
Wednesday 7th February	Parent/carer Open Meeting with the Head
Thursday 8th February	Year 10 Parent/Carer Evening
Friday 9th February	Year 9 full report sent home
	School Closes for half term

Best wishes

Headteacher

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YSGOL BRYNTEG SCHOOL
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Headteacher/Prifathro: Ryan Davies M.Ed.

17th November 2023

Dear parent/carer

I hope you have had a good week.

Our Sixth Form Open Evening is rapidly approaching and takes place on Thursday 30th November at 5pm. Pupils and parents, carers from year 11 are more than welcome to attend. Whilst the majority of our courses will still run as part of our offer, there are some which will not run for year 12 in the academic year 2023-24 with full details of the courses on offer being published in our prospectus which will be issued to pupils in the coming weeks.

The decision to not run some courses is an incredibly difficult one but is based on a number of factors including reduced funding and the fact that small class sizes are not viable in the current funding mechanism (it is recommended that the minimum class size is 16). For the courses affected, we will work with each learning area in order to plan how to ensure that these courses are viable in the future and if this is the case, they will again be part of our offer. Finally, we feel that, difficult as it is to make these decisions now, it is important that our pupils are given a true picture of their options and that we do not build up false hope and remove the options at a later date.

I think it can be agreed that our school site is absolutely beautiful and whilst our remembrance service last Friday was a solemn occasion, having the ability to bring over 1,900 pupils and staff together in one place really demonstrated how lucky we are to have such a facility.

Our site also gives our pupils the opportunity to be creative in the outdoors as you can see from the autumn wall which these wonderful pupils created!

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Our resources will be significantly enhanced in the next 3-4 weeks as our new multi-use playing surface is completed. Pupils and staff have waited such a long time for this and it will certainly make a huge difference to our provision at Brynteg. As you can imagine, the last few weeks have been extremely challenging in terms of the weather but the team from South Wales Sports Grounds really have worked hard in order to ensure that we have access to the new facility as soon as possible. Already it feels that the red 'gra' is a distant memory!

Finally, our wonderful sixth form art pupils are presenting their Mid-Way Show at Bahaus (opposite Carnegie House). It would be good to see you there for the Open Evening next Tuesday or if not, you are able to pop in over the week to see the work of our talented pupils.

Best wishes

Headteacher

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