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6<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome back to the last half term of the academic year at Porthcawl Comprehensive School, I hope that you enjoyed the Whitsun break. I write to provide a brief update for the half term ahead and I will write again in a few weeks.

### **Key Stage 3 Examinations**

This week our Key Stage 3 examinations/assessments are taking place. All students in Yr7 to Yr9 have been working very hard in their examination venues, and as I walk the school, visiting venues I have been very impressed with the effort and maturity demonstrated by all pupils. Examinations form one part of a progress journey in school, and these weeks allow pupils to gain a better understanding of their learning – the areas they can do well and the areas they need to develop further. From this point onwards, teachers at PCS will shape future learning and plans to best support our pupils. We also end the examination week with much deserved wellbeing activities - what a great way to finish an examination week!

### **GCSE & A-Level Examinations**

GCSE and A Level Examinations continue. From this week onwards, Yr11 Study Leave officially starts. This means that pupils are only required to attend school when they have a scheduled examination. It is important that each pupil is fully aware of their remaining exams as per their personalised timetable. This pattern of attendance also applies to Yr13 who will attend school for A Level exams only.

### **Year 12 into Year 13 Induction**

We welcome our Year 12 students back to PCS on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June. All students must attend from this date. During this week, our Yr12 into Yr13 Induction Programme starts. A lot of planning has gone into this week - thank you to Miss Crook and Mrs Bennion. Between Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June and Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> June, students must register with their form tutor before attending different tasks. We have prepared a range of activities to prepare and support our students with their forthcoming University applications and/or progression plans. It will be a very useful 3 days. During this half term there are further events planned for our senior students. There will be subject talks, mock interviews, law events, UCAT training, apprenticeship talks and more. All activities are designed to best support our Sixth Form students with their next steps.

## Cashless Catering - Update

This week we launched the cashless payment system in our school canteen, and I am sure your child has explained how this system has been working in school. As our Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 pupils are on study leave, this week the system has been in use with Year 7 to Year 10 (approximately 800 pupils). The launch has been successful and when we went 'live' the system has operated as planned.

At the start of the week, there were a very small number of pupils who missed the 'activation day' before half term (either having their biometric data (thumb print) taken or being issued with a unique code for payment) and we continue to complete this work.

If for some reason, this process has yet to be completed, it does not mean a pupil cannot purchase food from their account. It just means that there is a slightly slower payment process at the till. E.g. our kitchen staff must search for a name within the system. However, this is not a recognised payment approach; therefore, all pupils need a biometric (thumb print) or their unique code.

I thank all parents/carers for proactively signing up to Parent Pay, this alongside the excellent planning in school has made the process easier.

**Year 12 students** will complete the activation / sign up during their induction programme On Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June.

### **Key points / useful information:**

- **Parent Pay:** All parents/carers must ensure they have activated their Parent Pay account and ensure they have loaded funds onto their child's account. A very small number of families have yet to do so. If you have any questions, please contact: [info@porthcawlschool.co.uk](mailto:info@porthcawlschool.co.uk)
- **Validation Unit:** There is a validation unit (think of a cash machine) installed in the school reception. This unit allows pupils to add cash onto their account. This unit is fully functioning and is helpful if parents/carers have been unable to transfer funds electronically to their child's account.
- **Daily limits:** There is a £5.00 spend limit per day. Please note the price of a full meal is approximately £2.80.
- **Pupils entitled to a free school meal:** Each day funds are allocated automatically onto your child's account to the amount of £2.80.
- **Payment at tills:** in both canteens payment is made using a biometric (thumb print) reader or a code method.
- **Vending Machines:** We operate a few vending machines in both canteens. These are cashless also. Purchases from a vending machine can only be made with the biometric method (thumb).
- **Lend:** the system has been set up to allow one meal as a 'lend' meal. This means that no pupil will go without food if their account balance is on £0.00. We allow for one meal; therefore, a pupil's account can go to a balance or -£2.80. When this happens parents/carers will receive a prompt email reminding them to top up their child's account.

As we move through the next few weeks, I shall continue to keep you updated.

Best wishes,

Mike Stephens

M Stephens  
Headteacher