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Ysgol Gyfun
PORTHCAWL
Comprehensive School

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Headteacher/Pennaeth: M. J. Stephens NPQH, P Dip Ed, BA (Hons)

Deputy Headteacher/Dirprwy Bennaeth: D.W.A Beard BA (Hons)

Deputy Headteacher/Dirprwy Bennaeth: C-A. Painter BA (Hons)

2nd September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

At the start of the new term, I would like to provide you with an update of news from Porthcawl Comprehensive School. Please treat this letter as a start of term 'Headteacher Newsletter' as I reflect on recent achievements and outline some important information for the year ahead. I encourage you to read and refer to this letter during the weeks ahead.

Firstly, I hope you have all had an enjoyable summer with family and friends, and that your child is looking forward to the new term ahead. At this time of year, we welcome new families, and I hope that this is the start of a positive relationship together. I wrote to you in July to provide you with some details about arrangements for the start of term and the year ahead. My intention now is to provide you with updated information on these plans.

Examination Results

Once again, I was delighted with this summer's GCSE and A Level examination results, and I would like to congratulate all students in last year's Yr11 and Yr13 on their outstanding achievements. It gives me a real sense of pride seeing the young people in our community rewarded for their hard work. Overall, our students have received an outstanding set of results which will ensure they move on to the next phase of their education and lives. Throughout their time at PCS, they have all shown such resilience and determination. I would like to also congratulate the dedicated staff and our families for their hard work and continued support – a sincere thank you.

Summer 2024 A Level Results - Success!

We are very proud of our Yr13 students. Over 80% of all grades awarded were A*-C, 60% were A*-B and 32% were A*-A. Approximately 70% of students achieved three or more A Levels graded at A*-C and 20% of students achieved three or more A Levels graded at A*-A grades. In addition, nearly all students achieved the Level 3 Threshold. This year, almost all students are moving onto university, and many will be attending a Russell Group University. Our students will be studying a range of degrees including Law, Biology, Architecture, Engineering, French & German, Medicine, Mathematics, Computer Science and Art – to name a few! Other students have secured or are looking for employment, some have gained apprenticeships, and some have chosen to take time out before continuing their studies or embarking on a career. I wish all students every success for the future, and I look forward to welcoming them back to school whenever they are in Porthcawl. To read the full A Level press release, please follow this link: https://www.porthcawlschool.co.uk/news/a-level-results-2024/

Summer 2024 GCSE Results - More Success!

GCSE results are once again excellent - we are delighted with our student's achievements! Our provisional results show that three quarters the Year 11 cohort achieved five or more GCSEs graded A*-C including English Language and Mathematics. Almost 90% of students achieved five or more GCSEs graded A*-C, all students left school with a recognised qualification and 35% of students achieved five or more GCSEs graded A*-A grades. In 'Best Literacy',

88% of students achieved an A*-C grade, in 'Best Numeracy' 76% of students achieved an A*-C grade and in 'Best Science' 83% of students achieved an A*-C grade. A significant number of grades in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science were awarded at A*/A.

In 2024, we have once again maintained excellent points scores in Literacy, Numeracy and Science, and our Capped 9 points score (a student's best nine GCSEs including English Language and Mathematics) continues to be a very strong; demonstrating our commitment to maximising the highest grades for all students. Provisional figures released by the examination board suggest that in English Language and Mathematics our school's A*-C pass rate is significantly higher (+30%) than the Welsh average. Excellent achievements I'm sure you'll agree! To read the full GCSE press release, please follow this link: GCSE Results 2024 - Porthcawl School

Everyone at PCS is incredibly proud of all Yr11 students! We are also really pleased that a high number of students have chosen to return to the Sixth Form to continue their educational journey at PCS. In Yr12, we welcome several new students, and I wish them and our new families a warm PCS welcome. Our Sixth Form numbers have grown this year, and our Sixth form is now more than 300 students.

Summer 2024 GCSE Results - Even More Success!

Our Year 10 students also completed a small number of GCSEs papers, and their performance has been excellent too – we are very proud of their early achievements! There were some very strong module results in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, in addition, nearly all students completed the full GCSE in English Literature with 95% achieving a grade at A*-C, 72% achieving a grade A*-B and 36% achieving A*-A. These results will provide a very strong foundation for Year 11 – my sincere congratulations to all students, the English Faculty and the Science Faculty!

Staffing Changes / Updates

We also welcome the following new staff to Porthcawl Comprehensive School:

- Mr Simon Matthews Teacher of Computer Science (2nd in department)
- Mrs Gemma Thomas Head of Religious Studies
- Ms Sarah Owen Teacher of Mathematics and Science
- Miss Angharad Thom Teacher of Biology
- Mr Jason Morgan Operations Manager
- Mrs Joanna Marshall Curriculum Support Worker
- Miss Amanda Preece Learning Support Assistant

To all staff, we offer the best of Porthcawl welcomes.

Parents/Carers of Year 7

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the parents/carers of students who are new to the school; it was a pleasure to meet many of you at our open evening held last year and I am looking forward to welcoming your children to PCS on Wednesday 4th September. Moving from primary to secondary school is always an important moment in a child's life and we have made every effort to make this transition as smooth as possible.

We want to ensure that your child is happy and settled in school, and to support them we will be running an 'induction' for Year 7 over the first few days of the new term. We will be focusing on skills, the language of learning used at Porthcawl, and completing helpful IT induction (use of Class charts, Google Classroom etc). To further support transition, Yr7 will have increased time with their Form Tutor and Head of Year.

With the above in mind, there will also be an 'information evening' for new parents/carers on Wednesday 25th September. At this meeting we will share useful information and discuss important areas, such as the curriculum, assessment and extra-curricular opportunities. Senior and year group staff will be available to respond to any early queries you may have, there will be a series of short presentations delivered on this evening. Miss Painter, Deputy Headteacher will send further details soon - we look forward to you joining us.

Curriculum for Porthcawl

The national Curriculum for Wales outlines its 'Four Purposes of Education', enabling learners to become: ambitious and capable learners; enterprising and creative contributors; ethical and informed citizens and healthy and confident individuals. These purposes inform the design of our own, bespoke curriculum, marrying them with the individual ambitions, interests and potential of every student at Porthcawl. We believe that our responsibility under the Four Purposes is to "provide all pupils with the knowledge, skills, experiences and desire to thrive in the adult world". This is our **Curriculum Vision**. The curriculum we have designed supports our young people to develop as the 'Porthcawl Pupil'. These are the attributes and 'wants' we aim to develop with all pupils across the school community.

The 'Porthcawl Pupil' underpins:

- What we, as a school community, <u>believe</u> is important.
- What we, as a school community, value as important.
- What we, as a school community, <u>characterise</u> us as a school.

At Porthcawl, students are taught in subjects. This is because we believe subject concepts and knowledge are matter. Each subject has an important body of knowledge alongside specific skills, and each belong to a rich tradition that is unique to them.

For students to think critically and to form their own opinions, it is necessary to have something to think about. We therefore value a knowledge rich approach, delivered by expert teaching staff.

Our curriculum is broad and balanced, providing a wealth of learning across disciplinary subjects, and embraces all the mandatory elements: study of

English and Welsh; the three Cross-Curricular Skills (numeracy, literacy, digital competency); Relationships & Sexuality Education; Religion, Values & Ethics; Careers and Work-Related Experiences and this is underpinned by a clear emphasis on the central importance of developing pupils' integral skills.

For detailed information about the Curriculum for Porthcawl please follow this link to our dedicated 'Curriculum for Porthcawl' website: <u>Curriculum for Porthcawl School</u>

By following the above link, you will find out what we are aiming to achieve with our curriculum, what this looks like and what your child will learn. Each subject area has produced a 'Curriculum on a Page' resource which outlines the key concepts, learning and experiences your child will receive. Alongside of this you will find helpful information about how we will capture the progress your child is making and how we will share this information with you. In addition to this, there will be a range of information videos posted on our school website soon. Throughout the academic year ahead, further curriculum, learning and teaching updates will be provided by Assistant Headteacher,

Mr. Aldridge and assessment updates will be provided by Assistant Headteacher, Mrs. James.

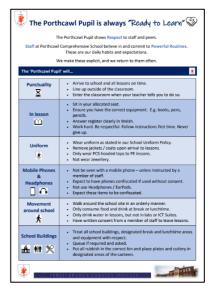
If you have any questions regarding the 'Curriculum for Porthcawl' you can contact the school and request to speak to Mr. Aldridge.

Behaviour for Learning / Expectations

One of the strengths of our school is the behaviour and attitude displayed by our students. This is created by positive relationships between students and staff, and through the desire of all teachers to provide students with the knowledge, skills, experiences, and desire to thrive in the adult world.

To ensure a positive learning environment we have a 'Ready to Learn' approach at the school. Staff at the school acknowledge positive behaviour and implement





a consistent approach to daily 'Standard Operating Procedures' so that poor behaviour can be challenged and dealt with quickly and efficiently.

Our 'Ready to Learn' system is built around respect, powerful routines, and consistent daily habits. We make behaviour expectations very clear and ensure that every student is ready to learn, every lesson, of every day. Our systems are built around explicit graduated responses. In assemblies this term and throughout the year we will be discussing our expectations; centred around our motto of "Perseverance Creates Success" and we will be reflecting upon the characteristics we expect in the "Porthcawl Pupil".

For more information about the 'Ready to Learn' system at PCS please follow this link: <u>'Ready to Learn' - Porthcawl</u> School.

ClassCharts is used to record "Ready to Learn" behaviour points.

School Uniform

It is very important that students arrive in full school uniform each morning. If there are any missing or incorrect items of uniform, then your child's form tutor and/or Head of Year will be in touch so that this can be rectified. If you have any queries regarding uniform, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Head of Year.

For details and information about School Uniform for 2024-2025 and how we are supporting affordability please see my letter from a previous academic year: School-Uniform-Academic-Year-2023-2024-.pdf (porthcawlschool.co.uk)

Recycling / waste disposal on school site

There are important changes to how we dispose of our waste on school site. Please see my separate letter regarding the recycling / waste disposal processes that all pupils and staff must follow.

Water Refill Stations

During the summer holiday, new water refill stations have been installed across the school site. We have replaced all our old refill stations, increased the number available and added new stations to outside areas. E.g. the side of identified buildings.

These refill systems, provide cold, filtered drinking water and are activated by a water bottle. Nearly all are activated by a sensor.

This is a more effective and sustainable system than the previous one. I therefore encourage all students and staff to bring a water bottle to school and refill water bottles at the start of the day, break time and lunch time.





Extra-Curricular Activities

A programme of extra-curricular activities will be shared with you as soon as possible. This will be shared with you via our 2024-2025 "What's On" brochure. This will present the weekly clubs and activities that take place across the school at break time, lunch time and at the end of the school day.

Social Media

Follow us on X and Facebook for regular updates on news and events using our X Handle @CompPorthcawl or via Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/porthcawlcomprehensiveschoolofficialpage. You can also check information regarding PE fixtures, results and sporting success using @porthcawlpe.

Parents/Carers Visiting the School

If you need to visit the school, please use the buzzer entry system at the front of the main reception building. Upon entry, all visitors must report to the main reception. Please note that teaching staff are not generally available during the school day and therefore it is preferable that you telephone or email via info@porthcawlschool.co.uk in advance to make an appointment.

Please can I also ask that parents/carers parking vehicles near the school are considerate to our neighbours. Please do not block driveways even if you stay in your car. This will ensure all local residents can access their properties / driveways.

Attendance & Holiday Leave

Regular school attendance is essential and vital to a good education. Attendance at Porthcawl is comparatively good, but still well below our expectations. Improving attendance is a priority for the school. The link between attendance and attainment is clear. If students are in school, they will usually do well academically, so we encourage all parents/carers to ensure that their child's attendance is as good as possible. Parents/carers will recognise that both the school and parents/carers have legal responsibilities to try to maintain the highest possible attendance — we therefore need to work together with this aim in mind.

We encourage all students to attend school on time, every day, and aim for 100% attendance. I fully understand that children become unwell, and that there can be exceptional circumstances for absences. However, I respectfully ask that you think carefully before keeping your child off school due to the impact attendance can have on attainment levels.

For example, over the course of one academic year, this is how attendance impacts learning:

- 100% attendance 0 days missed
- 95% attendance 2 weeks of learning missed
- 90% attendance 4 weeks of learning missed
- 85% attendance 5 ½ weeks of learning missed
- 80% attendance 7 ½ weeks of learning missed

Porthcawl Comprehensive School is committed to ensuring that every child reaches their full potential, and therefore requires your support in making sure your child's attendance is the highest it could be.

As we start the school year, please can I ask for consideration of the following:

- Ensuring that your child arrives at school on time.
- If your child is ill, please contact the school on each day of absence and indicate the likely return date.
- Ensure that where possible, medical appointments are made outside of school time.
- Ensure that holidays are not taken during school time.
- Notify the school as soon as possible of any absence and confirm when your child returns to school.
- Respond to any letters or telephone calls received regarding your child's attendance and punctuality.
- Contact your child's Head of Year if you are experiencing difficulty in getting your child into school.

Parents and carers are reminded that they should contact the school by 9:00am if their child is not able to attend school on that day. Parents and carers must state the full reason for the child's non-attendance (not just "feeling unwell") and indicate the likely date they will return to school. If your child is absent without an explanation, you will be contacted and asked to provide a reason for your child's absence.

I hope I have highlighted the importance of regular school attendance and please be reassured that we wish to work closely with all families to ensure that every child is successful with their continuity of learning. We want all students to achieve their full potential. Any absence affects a child's progress in school and regular absence will seriously impact on your child's potential to achieve. Please see the following School Attendance Information from Bridgend County Borough Council: https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/school-attendance/

Please be aware that holiday leave during term time is not encouraged as any absence will affect your child's educational progress and attainment. Please contact the school if any such absences are planned. Only in exceptional circumstances, and only if your child has good attendance, will a request for holiday leave be granted.

I am very grateful for your support in ensuring your child is fully prepared for a return to school in September.

School Site / Premises Work

During the summer break several installation works have been completed across the school site. I would like to thank our Premises Team who have overseen the completion of this scheduled works over the summer holiday period.

To provide a brief update about some of the works completed:

- x6 new Floodlights have be installed onto the AstroTurf. Previously there were only three, and these were not functioning due to electrical issues. New lighting units and x3 additional columns have been installed.
- New water refill stations have been installed across the school site both in internal and external spaces.

All completed work looks excellent and form part of our continued efforts to ensure the school site is continually modernised and updated to provide the best possible facilities for students and staff. We look forward to more project works scheduled throughout the next 12 months. As planned projects are completed, I will update.

School Improvement Plan 2023-2026

Our School Improvement Plan (SIP) reflects the needs of all stakeholders, students, parents/carers and staff. The core purpose of the plan and the school is to receive the best educational outcomes for every learner. The plan is also the vehicle by which we deliver the core aims of our school.

For 2023-2026, objectives and priorities within our improvement plan have been determined following the school's self-evaluation of 1. Leadership, 2. Curriculum, Learning and Teaching and 3. Wellbeing, Equity, and Inclusion.

Our School Improvement Plan has three main priorities and smaller development priorities. The 2024-2025 academic year marks the start of Yr2 of our three-year plan and I share below our overarching three priorities and smaller development priorities that we will focus upon this year.

2024-2025 Academic Year Priority 2: Outstanding, Curriculum, Priority 1: Highly Effective Leadership at all **Priority 3: Exceptional Wellbeing, Equity** Levels (IA3) Learning & Teaching (IA1) and Inclusion (IA2) **1.1** The 'Curriculum for Porthcawl' 2.1 Highly effective design, development, **3.1** Improved attendance and delivery of the 'Curriculum for 1.2 Refined systems & structure for self-3.2 A continued culture and ethos which Porthcawl' embodies a holistic understanding of our evaluation 1.3 High quality professional learning 2.2 Consistently high standards of teaching pupils, and their wellbeing needs and learning (Reduce variation with and 3.3 Consistently strong behaviour, values, growth 1.4 Cross-curricular skills across the improve quality of teaching) and expectations 2.3 Consistently high standards of 3.4 Wellbeing is not 'Invisible' curriculum **1.5** Widen the opportunities for pupils to assessment across the curriculum develop their Welsh language skills 1.6 A broad & balanced curriculum (2025)

To read the Published Summary of our School Improvement Plan please follow: <u>Year-2-SIP-Summary-Priorities-2023-2026.pdf</u> (porthcawlschool.co.uk)

Mobile Phones

I would like to start the term by highlighting mobile phone use on the school premises and to ask for your support in ensuring your child clearly understands the rules and expectations with regards to mobile phone use at Porthcawl Comprehensive School.

As outlined in our "Ready to Learn" procedures and our School Code of Conduct, mobile phones used during school time will be confiscated. This includes break, lunchtime and when using the outside recreational areas of our school site. Mobile Phones may be brought to school, but they must remain in each student's bag. For several reasons, a student might be granted permission to use their phone however, when this is required, they will be given clear instructions by a member of staff.

There are several reasons why we do not wish students to use their phones during the school day:

- Phones are distracting when in lessons;
- We want students to focus on their learning;
- We wish to ensure robust safeguarding of students and staff;
- Social media is the cause of many friendship and self-esteem problems;
- The internet has adult content which can be used inappropriately; and
- We encourage students to talk and socialise with their friends at break and lunchtime.

I ask that you remind your child for the period of time they are on the school site; their phone should be switched off and remain in their bag. Confiscated phones can be collected at the end of the day from the reception area. Repeated confiscation will require parents/carers to collect their child's phone from school. Please also note that the same applies to earpods/headphones that are connected to electronic devices. Inappropriate use of mobile phones, social media and the recording and distribution of videos can result in fixed-term exclusion from school.

Parent/Carer Survey - Feedback

Many thanks to all parents/carers who completed our Parent/Carer Voice Survey in July 2024. I welcome your feedback and views. This survey will be completed annually, and it is an opportunity for you to support us with our evaluation and planning processes. Your feedback matters to us and we can reflect on your responses proactively. We look at this data to identify what is working well but also to identify whether there are any specific areas that we need to address at the school. This is a survey that is not designed to capture a snapshot in time but a reflection over the last academic year.

When reading feedback the summary statements below, please use the table as a guide:

Most	Many	Majority	Around half	Minority	Few	Very few
+90%	+70%	+60%	+50%	-40%	-20%	-10%

The feedback collated in July 2024 shows that:

- Most parents/carers believe their child likes attending Porthcawl Comprehensive School.
- Most parents/carers believe Porthcawl Comprehensive School is a safe school.
- Most parents/carers believe Porthcawl Comprehensive School helped their child settle in well when they started.
- **Around half** of parents/carers do not know if bullying, harassment or discrimination are dealt with appropriately and a **minority** of parents/carers agree that it is dealt with appropriately.
- Most parents/carers believe their child is making good progress in Porthcawl Comprehensive School.
- Most parents/carers believe their child is appropriately challenged to support their academic progress.
- Most parents/carers believe they are kept informed of their child's progress at Porthcawl Comprehensive School.

- A majority of parents/carers believe additional academic support is available when needed at Porthcawl
 Comprehensive School. However, a minority of parents/carers state they do not know and note this is not
 applicable to their child.
- Most parents/carers believe their child is positive about their academic future.
- Many parents/carers believe wellbeing support is available when needed. However, a few parents/carers are unable to comment fully and do not know if wellbeing support is available when needed.
- Many parents/carers are happy with how behaviour is addressed at Porthcawl Comprehensive School.
- Most of parent/carers are happy with how Porthcawl Comprehensive School monitors and supports attendance.
- Many parents/carers believe that Porthcawl Comprehensive School offers a range of exciting learning experiences including educational trips and visits.
- Many of parents/carers believe Porthcawl Comprehensive School seeks their views.
- A majority of parents/carers believe if they share an issue with the school, they are happy that it is dealt with appropriately. However, a few do not know and/or note this response as not applicable.
- Many of parents/carers state that Porthcawl Comprehensive School considers their feedback and, if needed, responds to it.
- Most parents/carers believe Porthcawl Comprehensive School shares information in a timely and clear way.
- Most parents/carers are happy with the communication they receive from Porthcawl Comprehensive School.
- Most parents/carers would recommend Porthcawl Comprehensive School to other parents/carers.

We have already started to address some of the verbal feedback provided and I will provide further updates as we move through the academic year ahead. To provide initial feedback. Homework featured as a point within parent/carer feedback; therefore, we have revised our Homework Policy, and we have introduced homework updates via ClassCharts to improve communication about homework being set.

Keeping you informed

As a school we aim to keep you informed about your child and any events taking place. This is done through Class Charts and School Comms. It is vital that your contact information is accurate, and I ask all families to keep us informed of any changes to postal addresses, telephone numbers (including mobiles) and email addresses.

Registration details for Class Charts for Year 7 students will be provided in due course. Please also note, accurate emails are needed for School Comms.

School Day

For the 2024-2025 academic year we will operate a 50hr two-week timetable. Each student will receive 25 x1hour lessons per week.

The timing of the school day is as follows:

Registration/Wellbeing/Assembly	8:45 – 9:00
Lesson 1	9:00 – 10:00
Lesson 2	10:00 - 11:00
Break	11:00 – 11:20
Lesson 3	11:20 – 12:20
Lesson 4	12:20 – 1:20
Lunch	1:20 - 2:00
Lesson 5	2:00 – 3:00
Extra-Curricular Programme	3:00

INSET Days 2024-2025

There are six INSET days for the academic Year 2024-2025. The dates are as follows:

Autumn Term 2024	Spring Term 2025	Summer Term 2025
Monday 2 nd September 2024	Monday 17 th February 2025	Monday 21 st July 2025
Tuesday 3 rd September 2024	Friday 11 th April 2025	
Friday 29 th November 2024		

The 2024-2025 term dates for schools across Bridgend can also be accessed here: https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/term-dates/

Progress Evenings

Progress Evenings will be taking place on the following dates. These evenings provide opportunity for parents/carers to speak with all teachers about their child's progress. During the academic year, further information about each Progress Evening will be released by the senior member of staff linked to each year group.

Year Group	Date of Progress Evening		
Year 7	Wednesday 4th December 2024		
Year 8	Wednesday 9th April 2025		
Year 9	Wednesday 5th February 2025		
Year 10	Wednesday 12th March 2025		
Year 11	Wednesday 16th October 2024		
Year 12	Wednesday 19th February 2025		
Year 13	Wednesday 20th November 2024		

I look forward to continuing the strong partnerships between families and the school. As you know this is especially important in enabling children to achieve success and so I ask for your full support of all school policies and for your continued proactive involvement in your child's education. I am very proud to lead Porthcawl Comprehensive School, and I look forward to working with you throughout this academic year.

I shall provide further updates as we work through the new term. Here's to another year of success at Porthcawl Comprehensive School.

Kind regards,

Mike Stephens

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Headteacher