April 3rd 2020

Dear all

As we approach the most unusual Easter holiday any of us could have imagined, I would like to thank everyone for the wonderful messages of support we have received over the past two weeks. They are so much appreciated.

Many of our staff have now been designated as key workers, and have been supporting the community in lots of ways and in great numbers. We have combined with our cluster schools to create a hub at Maes-yr-Haul and Bryntirion is a distribution centre for free school meals. In addition, members of staff have been busy at home preparing and maintaining home learning for all pupils. I hope you have been able to access these, and have found them helpful and manageable. The staff at Bryntirion have been outstanding during this period, and I am grateful for everything they have done, and are continuing to do, to support our community.

It is, of course, really important that staff, students and parents have a proper Easter break where possible. The adjustment has been so stressful for all and we know from the communications we have had that some have found it difficult to manage unfamiliar routines and the restrictions placed on their everyday lives. Therefore, whilst we have provided some challenges and work, and would encourage all children to read daily, we will not be setting any additional work over Easter. It is time for a break, and we will resume home learning plans after the Easter holiday.

In the meantime, there are many free reading resources online, including 30 books by David Walliams, which can be found on the following websites:

https://soundcloud.com/world-of-walliams-audio

We know many parents will be wondering about the status of the Easter trips and the situation regarding refunds. Following guidance from the UK government and the FCO, all Easter trips have now been cancelled rather than postponed, and insurance claims for all the overseas trips have been submitted. We will inform you of the outcomes once we have had notification from the insurers. We are very grateful for your patience with regards to this, as travel companies and insurers are dealing with an unprecedented situation.

Earlier this week, we published information and answers to frequently asked questions about examinations and qualifications. There will be more information to follow and, as soon as we have it, we will communicate with you.

Mrs Owen shared some useful guidance on the importance of wellbeing yesterday, and we are always most concerned about the welfare and wellbeing of Bryntirion pupils and families. Please see links below for further support you may find of use. These have been produced by the Bridgend Educational Psychology Service to provide focused information and activities for families around mental health and positivity in our children and young people.

Bridgend EPS Mental Health and Wellbeing Pack
Bridgend EPS Positive Psychology Pack
We want to continue with good news stories to celebrate some of the lovely communications we have had from you and from our community. In the last two weeks our pupils have made rainbows for NHS workers, praise postcards for family members and written to our elderly neighbours in the Oaklands and Heathfields residential care homes. Our school choir has just finished its first virtual performance, which you can listen to on our school you tube channel. In the video you can also see examples of how pupils from the Performing Arts Department have been keeping busy and positive over the last two weeks. We hope they make you smile!

We are still here over Easter and contactable through the emails on our website and TEAMs. Even in such challenging and difficult times, I would like to wish you all a safe, healthy and peaceful Easter.

For students in years 10-13 we have just received an update from Qualifications Wales on the awarding of grades this summer. It can be found on the link below;

https://www.qualificationswales.org/english/publications/grades-a-message-to-learners/

RK Pawar – Headteacher