Dear Parents, Guardians and Students

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the first newsletter of 2020. As always it has been a very busy January, with many events and activities taking place at Bryntirion and this newsletter gives just a small flavour of what has been going on so far this year.

As you may be aware officers from Local Authority visited school on January 29th to consult with the whole school community on the future of post-16 provision in Bridgend. There are significant implications for Bryntirion in relation to the decision councillors will make in April 2020, and the position of the school in supporting the retention of post-16 education here at Bryntirion is unequivocal and unambiguous. Our popular, successful and viable sixth form is an integral part of our school, and we believe it is in the interest of our pupils and this community for it to be retained. I am grateful for the attendance of pupils and parents for your support at the consultation events.

If you have not already done so, you can take part in the consultation via the BCBC website:


We are delighted that the strong progress of the school has been formally recognised in its updated status in the National Categorisation judgement. Following robust moderation, the school is rated as **Green ‘A’**.

The National School Categorisation system gives us a clear and fair picture of how well a school is performing compared with other schools across Wales and helps to identify the schools that need the most help, support and guidance to improve. The system is based on three simple steps. It is not purely data-driven and takes into account the quality of leadership, teaching and learning in schools.

**HIGHLY EFFECTIVE**

* Well run school with strong leadership
* Clear about priorities for improvement
* A track record in raising standards
* Has the capacity to support other schools

4 days support

We are looking forward to starting the options process again with Year 8 and 11 again and will be meeting with parents over the next few weeks at consultation evenings and parents’ evenings.

**Thursday 6th February – Parents’ Evening – Year 8**

**Wednesday 12th February – Options Evening – Year 11**

**Wednesday 26th February – Options Evening – Year 8**

Yours faithfully

RK Pawar
Whole School Events

The Community & Sports Officer from the Prostate Cymru charity met with our Welsh Baccalaureate Year 12 students who raised £130.91 in their super staff ‘Big Breakfast’. This was part of their Community Challenge work to promote a charity of their choice.

Bridgend Inspire for Life Awards 2020

Well done to Year 9 pupil Oliver Davies who has been nominated and shortlisted to attend the Inspire for Life Awards 2020 held at Porthcawl Grand Pavilion, March 5th. Oliver has been selected for the ‘Future is Bright’ category because of the fantastic work he does for others.
**Sport**

Congratulations to ICT teacher Mr C. Jones who has recently been selected to represent Great Britain at the European Triathlon Championships in Austria this summer. We wish him well with all his training preparation.

**Science Club**

Pupils in Science club have been experimenting in making crystals using the Bunsen burners and learning about sugar consumption in drinks.
Performing Arts

Performing Arts students recently watched ‘Come From Away’ in theatre and were also involved in a workshop at the famous Pineapple Dance Studios in London.
Design Technology

Year 7 and 8 pupils in Design Technology have been busy making gumball dispensers in woodwork and t-shirt designs in Textiles club.
Welsh Department trip to Llangrannog

Pupils in Year 7 and 8 have recently travelled to West Wales to visit Llangrannog to improve their Welsh speaking and take part in a number of activities. The trip also developed pupils' communication and problem solving skills. Diolch yn fawr iawn to the Welsh Department for such a successful educational visit.
World Mental Health Day

Mental Health is a topic which frequently surfaces during school council meetings and students voice activities. We are proud that so many young people are being proactive in developing their own wellbeing and are also seeking out ways to support their peers.

This week students have been taking part in Mental Wellbeing assemblies with Dr Preece, with Thursday 6th February being Time To Change’s Time to Talk Day. During form time on Thursday students were invited to walk and talk with a friend during break or lunchtime as a chance to connect and also support wellbeing with physical activity.

Dr Preece reminded learners that, in many circumstances, we are able to improve our mental wellbeing by ensuring that we take care of ourselves with a few basic health and lifestyle messages: ensure that we get sufficient sleep, eat healthy and balanced meals, put down our phones, tablets and consoles and connect with those around us and take regular exercise and spend time in nature.

Bryntirion has a number of ongoing initiatives which support mental wellbeing. The Bryntirion Way reminds our learners to be Ready, Respectful and Safe, which applies to the way in which our young people are expected to communicate with one another, as well as relating to their day to day behaviour around school.

We are also looking forward to achieving accreditation for the Food and Fitness Phase V of the Healthy Schools Award at the end of the school year. Students receive information regarding the link between food choices, movement and mental health in Science, Health and Wellbeing, PE and Food Technology lessons and Dr Preece is undergoing additional research with the support of a specialist group of teachers and Year 9 students into how we can develop this work in preparation for the new curriculum.

Bryntirion has a team of staff who are able to provide support to young people who may be experiencing additional personal challenges in their lives to include a Family Therapist, counsellor, Health and Wellbeing Officers and an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant. A number of teachers are also currently undergoing additional training in Trauma Informed Schools to ensure that all learners, regardless of circumstance, have access to the best possible learning and pastoral experience.

Dr Preece
Safer Internet Day and acceptable use of ICT

From **Monday 10th February** all students will be participating in year assemblies with Mr Allinson and Dr Preece to mark the week of Safer Internet Day **on Tuesday 11th**. These assemblies will be an opportunity for everyone to revisit the key messages for safer internet use which they will have learned in ICT and Health and Wellbeing lessons since Year 7. The slogan for this years celebrations is ‘Together for a Better Internet’ which reflects the theme of Online Identity.

These assemblies will ask students to reflect on the ways in which we use the Internet, particularly social media, and the manner in which our language and behaviours can impact on others in harmful ways. Our students will be reminded that aspects of identity are protected under the Equality Act 2010 and that abusive and threatening behaviours - to include text, photos and videos - can lead to criminal action.

Bryntirion is proud of its diverse and inclusive community. We recognise that trying out new ideas and behaviours is, for many, a really important part of growing up and preparing for adulthood but we want all young people to be able to participate safely. To this end, during our assemblies students will be reminded to THINK before posting:

T - Is it true?
H - Is it helpful?
I - Is it interesting?
N - Is it necessary?
K - Is it kind?

This years theme is also a timely reminder to consider how much of our identity we choose to share online. In the case of young people in particular, there can be safely implications for revealing your name and location as well as other identifying details to strangers online. During the assembly - but this could form the basis of a conversation that could take place at home - students will be able to revisit important safety messages regarding the fact that, whilst it can be really fun to meet and get to know new people, not everyone is honest about who they really are.

There are some great resources available for parents at sites such as CEOPs, ChildNet, WiseKids and Internet Matters, the latter of which Dr Preece is a member of the Expert Panel. Dr Preece will be holding a series of information evenings after half term for parents on the subject of online safety.

**Dr Preece**