

18th May 2020

Dear parents/carers/pupils

I hope you and your families are well.

You may have had the chance to look at the most recent community video produced by the school to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day. It can be viewed by visiting our school website or twitter account. Thank you to those of you were able to make a contribution.

<https://twitter.com/BryntirionComp>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v9viQgzvtKM&feature=youtu>

I had the pleasure of listening to Mrs Jane Walker speaking on Radio Wales about the importance of VE Day. Mrs Walker spoke with such dignity and pride about her own experiences, and the remarkable sacrifices and services of others.

Mrs Walker also described her pride at being a teacher at Bryntirion and spoke with heartfelt warmth about our Year 11 pupils, many of whom feel a sense of dislocation at the moment, having missed out on all the rites of passages associated with the end of compulsory schooling. They would, of course in ordinary times, have in the middle of the main summer examination series. In your final week of school, we have prepared some special messages for you this week. Other year groups should also look out for messages this week too!

We have now been in lockdown for nearly two months and I know parents and pupils will be anxious for news about when there may be a possible return to school. Whilst it appears to be the case that groups of children in English schools, (mainly in the primary phase) may be returning to school at the start of June, no dates have yet been set by the Welsh Government for an imminent return to school here.

On Friday, however, the Welsh government did publish its roadmap for 'unlocking' the lock down and a 'traffic light system' will determine the next actions by government. There is a clear 'ambition' to support the return of at least some learners to school before the summer holiday.

Also on Friday, the Minister for Education Kirsty Williams, published [*The decision framework for the next phase of education and childcare: considerations, planning and challenges*](#). The framework sets out the hierarchy of decisions which will be taken in advance of the next phase of schooling, looking at the scientific evidence as a key driver. This document has been prepared for use at all points of the journey, through to schools being fully operational again, whenever that may be.

B – Home (Distance/Online) Learning

Heads of Year and subject teachers have reported that our new approach to homeworking has been well received by many parents and pupils. I hope you have found the suggested working arrangements more manageable and straightforward. The new fortnightly timetable will be released on May 18th. The work contained here will extend until Friday 5th June in order to take into account the Whitsun half term break. Again, we hope you find the activities useful and enjoyable, and would love to hear news about how you get on. For those Year 11 students who are considering returning



to school in Year 12, we will be sharing resources and bridging units to help you to prepare for your A level studies in September. These will be shared with you via TEAMS and will be available straight after half term. Please look out of them.

Please note that any work set by teachers for Year 12 students is **compulsory**, and may be used to determine progress into Year 13 in September.

C – School trips

Parents will be aware that, following advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and UK Government, the school was advised to cancel trips which had been planned for the Easter holiday. In consultation with the local authority, we are still endeavouring to secure refunds from the various travel companies and our insurance provider. This is the case in schools across the UK at the moment, as the travel industry and insurance companies are experiencing unprecedented demand. When we have news we will, of course, update you with any progress in securing refunds.

D - Our own health and wellbeing

Over the last two months, we have tried to emphasise, more than anything else, the importance of looking after our own and others' wellbeing, in doing so, we have put together some essential information, links and sources of support for our school community. If you would like to share anything you have found useful with other families we will be delighted if you contact us on the admin email. The attached guidance was shared with families earlier in the crisis and contains links you may find of use. We are very proud of our pupils, and how they are generally coping with this extraordinary restriction placed on their lives. Members of staff have tried to contact families over the last few weeks to support the wellbeing of families.

E – Grow a sunflower

Thank you for all the lovely NHS rainbows, praise postcards, letters, songs, VE day posters and cakes you and your families have made over the last few weeks in response to our Wellbeing Challenges. I'd like to set you all a practical challenge this morning: can you grow a sunflower? Now is an ideal time to plant them so get your gardening gloves on and we will give prizes out in September for the best ones. This challenge is open to everyone – staff, parents, other family members and pupils (including the Year 6 pupils who will be joining us as Year 7 in the autumn). I'm afraid you will have to buy your own seeds this time. Please let us know how you're getting on by sending photos of your sunflowers' progress to Claire.hawkes@bridgend.gov.uk or tagging us @BryntirionComp on social media.

If you need any support or advice, please remember that we are ready to help you wherever possible.

Take care everyone.

Yours sincerely

RK Pawar

