



Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers

## Return to School – September 2025

I hope you and your families have enjoyed the summer break and that your children are looking forward to the start of a new school year at Bryntirion. We are very much looking forward to welcoming everyone back to school on **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September**.

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new headteacher of Bryntirion Comprehensive School. I began my teaching career at Bryntirion in 1997 and spent 17 happy years here before taking on the role of deputy headteacher at Mountain Ash Comprehensive School. I am thrilled and excited to be returning to Bryntirion and look forward to working with pupils, staff, governors and parents/carers to build on the school's success in the future. I'd also like to thank Mr Ravi Pawar for the excellent leadership he has provided over the past 8 years and we wish him all the very best for his retirement.

Mr Pawar wrote to you in July to provide you with some details about arrangements for the start of term and other key information, but I have included some updated information on these plans below:

### Start of Term Arrangements

As INSET for staff takes place on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> and Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September, the first day of term for all pupils in Years 7 to 13 is **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September**. Pupils in Years 8 to 13 will go directly to their form classrooms for registration at 8.40 a.m. They will then attend separate year group assemblies during the morning and will attend normal lessons after morning break.

All pupils in Year 7 will assemble in the Sports Hall for registration at 8.40 a.m. where they will be welcomed by the Head of Year 7, form tutors, the Chair and Vice Chair of Governors and myself. For the remainder of the day, and on Thursday morning, Year 7 pupils will receive an induction to the school, focusing on skills, the language of learning used at Bryntirion and an IT induction (Class charts, Teams etc.). Year 7 will attend normal lessons from Lesson 4 on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September. A reminder of the school day is outlined below:

Registration/Wellbeing/Assembly	8.40 - 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 - 13.20
Lunch	13.20 - 14.00
Lesson 5	14.00 - 15.00
Extra – Curricular programme	15.00





### **Parents of Year 7 pupils**

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the parents of pupils who are new to the school; it was a pleasure to meet many of you at the welcome evening held last term. 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 in school and has settled in well. With this in mind, there will be a 'year ahead' meeting for new Year 7 parents at **5.00pm in the Senior Hall on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> September** at which we will discuss matters such as teaching, learning and assessment, communications and extra-curricular opportunities. Senior and year group staff will be available to respond to any early queries you may have.

### **KS4 and KS5 examination results**

We are extremely proud of the results obtained by our students this year. The past years have been such a challenge for every student, and these achievements are so well deserved. At A level there have been some outstanding individual results, and nearly all our students secured the grades necessary to allow them to continue to study in the further higher education institution of their choice, or to enter the world of work. More than a quarter of all 'A' levels were graded at either A\* or A, and students of all abilities in a wide range of subjects excelled in their studies.

Congratulations to everyone on achieving so well at GCSE also – almost a third of pupils achieved at least 5 A\*/A grades and two thirds achieved at least 5 A\*-C grades, including English and Maths. Pupils of all abilities and interests excelled in a wide range of qualifications. As always, success in school is a result of the partnership between pupils, teachers and parents, so our congratulations and thanks extend to everyone. We wish all those who have now left Bryntirion the very best of luck for the future.

### **Year 11 2025-26**

Pupils in this year's Year 11 will have already taken examinations and other assessments which lead to GCSE qualifications, and we have a good, informed idea of how each pupil is proceeding in each subject. You will note that we have set this year's parents' evening earlier in the school year on **Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October**, in the first part of the Autumn Term. Parents of all pupils in Year 11 pupils will be invited to a personal interview with senior staff in January to discuss the progress being made and to identify any essential actions or interventions required to ensure success. You will receive a separate individual invitation to this meeting.

### **Years 7-10 2025-26**

Pupils in Years 7 to 9 will continue to follow the new Curriculum for Wales whilst Year 10 pupils will begin to study the newly reformed Wave 1 GCSEs. A 'year ahead' meeting for the parents of Year 10 pupils will take place at 5.00 p.m. on **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September**. The syllabuses for the new Wave 2 GSCEs to be taught from September 2026 will be published later in the academic year and will inform the options programme for Year 9 students in the spring term. By 2027, a full suite of new qualifications will be available to pupils in Years 7 and 8. We will keep parents fully informed about these changes and what they mean for your child's education.





### **INSET Days & Term Dates**

There will be 6 INSET days in the next academic year 2025-26. These are:

INSET 1 - Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025  
INSET 2 - Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025  
INSET 3 - Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2025  
INSET 4 - Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2026  
INSET 5 - Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026  
INSET 6 - Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2026

The term dates for 2025-26 are:

#### **Autumn Term – 2025:**

**Start:** Monday 1<sup>st</sup> September

**Half-term:** Monday 27<sup>th</sup> October - Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October

**End:** Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December

#### **Spring Term – 2026:**

**Start:** Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January

**Half-term:** Monday 16<sup>th</sup> February - Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February

**End:** Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March

#### **Summer Term – 2026:**

**Start:** Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April

**Half-term:** Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May - Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May

**End:** Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July

### **Parents' Evenings**

**Year 7** – Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Year 8** – Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**Year 9** – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**Year 10** – Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025

**Year 11** – Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025

**Year 12/13** – Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2025

All parents' evenings will take place in person at the school. Details and invitations will take place prior to the evening. We also ask parents to contribute following these parents' evening to an annual online consultation and encourage all parents to take part.

### **Catering Facilities in School**

Catering provision is unchanged in 2025-26. The Catering Service at BCBC actively promotes and provides healthy options for eating and drinking and monitors uptake of these options. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals will be provided with a free meal on each day they attend. Other pupils will be expected to pay for their meals. Children will be permitted to bring a packed lunch to school.

Pupils in Years 8 and 9 will use the canteen in D Block and those in Years 10 and 11 will use the Senior Hall canteen in E Block. Year 7 pupils will be informed of the





canteen allocated to their form class. Students in Years 12 and 13 are permitted to use either canteen or can leave the school site should they wish to do so, but they must use their fob or the sign-out facility in reception before leaving.

Cashless payment systems will be in operation as usual from September. However, parents/carers will need to ensure there is sufficient balance on their child's account. Pupils whose parents have provided permission will be able to use the catering service's fingerprint recognition system; alternatively, they can continue to provide PIN numbers. If you have not received a recent email with your child's account balance, please contact the school to ask for this information. It is unlikely that cash machines in school will be accessible, initially, and parents/carers are advised of the need to credit school meal accounts via the '[Pay it](#)' function on the Bridgend County Borough Council website. This is the usual method for adding credits to accounts for school meals.

At the start of term, the queues in the canteens always cause delays and it takes a little time for pupils (and staff) to get into the routine following the summer holiday. For that reason, we operate extended lunch and break for Year 7 during the first week. The queues settle down quickly after any initial complications, so please be patient at the start of term.

Please advise your child that they need to inform either their Head of Year or school reception if they have not been served or do not have the means to pay on any day. Form tutors will also reinforce this message.

### **Access to the School Site**

In the interest of security please note that parents and carers will only be able to come onto the school site for a pre-arranged appointment. We will not permit any other visitors onto the school site without a pre-booked appointment. All visitors should therefore report to reception (ground floor E Block) to sign in.

### **Expectations: Uniform, Jewellery and Mobile Devices**

We would be grateful for the support of parents in ensuring that children are correctly attired, including appropriate footwear and hair colour as outlined in our school policy, when we return after the summer holiday. **Hoodies and leggings are not permitted.** Please note that the official badged item for Bryntirion is the school jumper. Plain white polo shirts may be worn as part of the summer uniform. Pupils are expected to wear the Autumn/Winter uniform upon restarting in September.

We have made arrangements so that second-hand school uniforms are available for parents and carers to acquire through a new uniform recycling and exchange scheme. Please contact either Mrs Alison Markey or Mrs Eloise Lowry if you would like to acquire any uniform items through this scheme:

[Eloise.LOWRY@bryntirioncs.bridgend.cymru](mailto:Eloise.LOWRY@bryntirioncs.bridgend.cymru).

[Alison.MARKEY@bryntirioncs.bridgend.cymru](mailto:Alison.MARKEY@bryntirioncs.bridgend.cymru)





The only jewellery permitted is one small plain stud in the lobe of each ear. Pupils are not allowed to wear any other form of body jewellery or piercings, including rings, in the interests of their own health and safety [School Uniform Policy 2.pdf](#)

Please note that:

- Mobile devices/phones must not be seen or heard in any lesson at any time (They must be switched to silent and stored in school bags).
- Mobile devices/phones are permitted to be used appropriately at break and lunchtimes to access school-based electronic platforms (e.g. TEAMS, Classcharts etc.)
- Personal headphones are not to be seen at any time during the school day.
- We have established strict measures to address the misuse of mobile devices in school. This will include confiscation (until the end of the school day) where devices are seen or heard in classrooms, and sanctions where pupils either misuse a device or refuse confiscation on request.

### **Be Ready for School**

It is important to begin the school year properly equipped for learning. With that in mind, please ensure that your child is ready for school. The required equipment includes:

- black ballpoint pen
- ruler
- pencils
- coloured pencils
- pencil sharpener
- eraser
- maths set – compass, protractor etc
- scientific calculator

### **Our Bryntirion Curriculum**

#### **The Four Purposes**

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 Bryntirion. We believe that our responsibility under the Four Purposes is to ensure that students acquire powerful knowledge, understanding and skills to become confident members of society. The curriculum supports our young people to become kind, hardworking individuals, who embody our school values.

#### **Curriculum**

At Bryntirion, our curriculum is broad and balanced, providing a wealth of learning across disciplinary subjects, and embraces all the mandatory elements: the study of English and Welsh; cross-curricular skills (numeracy, literacy, digital competency); Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE); Religion, Values & Ethics (RVE); Careers and Work-Related Experiences (CWRE). Our curriculum is underpinned by a clear emphasis on the central importance of developing pupils' integral skills.







Integration of skills is realised through a range of 'challenges' within and across subject disciplines. Cross curricular challenges include: 'My Health', 'My Future', Dysgu Byw', 'First Give' and 'My World'.

### **Progression and Assessment**

Our curriculum is structured to ensure that all pupils make progress in their learning as they move through the school, informed by the national Principles of Progression. To support pupils' progress and monitor the effectiveness of our curriculum, we adopt a number of assessment practices. Ongoing '**formative**' assessment activities are those that arise as part of the learning experience in lessons. Teachers assess pupils' understanding and recall during lessons and adapt their teaching or future teaching plans to ensure progress for all. In addition, to identify progress over time and to enable us to evaluate our practice and curriculum, we conduct more infrequent, substantial '**summative**' style assessments through rich tasks.

### **Implementation & Review**

Our curriculum is not fixed: it is subject to constant review. Robust self-evaluation of our curriculum requires participation from not only our teaching staff, but also from parents/carers, governors and pupils. The curriculum will grow, as we endeavour to meet the needs of our pupils and the challenges that lie ahead of them.

Our aim is:

*"To have high expectations and aspirations for everyone, and in everything we do."*

We will do this through:

- High quality teaching and assessment, and a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils.
- A culture of strong and secure wellbeing, and positive attitudes to life and learning.
- Effective leading and improving.

### **Celebrating Achievement**

We are always keen to celebrate the many achievements of pupils, and this may, on occasion, involve **using photographs**. If you do **not** wish your child's photograph to be part of any publication at school, please inform me in writing. The school has traditionally endeavoured to praise and reward pupils for their effort as well as their attainment, and we will be focusing on ensuring these achievements are celebrated and communicated as widely as possible.

Information regarding pupils' achievement is often published on the school's website and social media platforms, along with other key information. This information is updated on a regular basis and includes reference to current and forthcoming events and activities.

### **Attendance and Holiday Leave**

One of our key priorities for 2025-26 is to improve attendance. In 2024-25 attendance was approximately 91.2%. Overall, on average, every pupil missed a day's school every two weeks. This meant that, on average, **nearly 4 weeks of school were missed by each pupil last year, and this is well below levels of attendance in 2019.**





Regular school attendance is essential and vital to a good education. This is why it is such a high priority for the school and its teaching staff, governors, parents and pupils. Whilst attendance at Bryntirion compares favourably with other schools, it is well below our own expectations.

The link between attendance and attainment is so clear. If pupils are in school, they will usually do well academically, so we encourage all parents to ensure that pupils' attendance is as good as possible. Parents will recognise that both the school and parents have legal responsibilities to try to maintain the highest possible attendance – we therefore need to work together with this aim in mind.

If your child is unable to attend school, please contact the school by 9.00 a.m. If your child is absent without an explanation, you will be contacted and asked to provide a reason for your child's absence.

We continue to need your support in ensuring all pupils have good attendance and want to work in partnership with you to achieve this.

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.** You will be asked to complete a request form outlining the unique reason for your request; please ensure it is submitted at least 4 weeks in advance of any planned absence.

In conclusion, I am very grateful for your support in ensuring your child is fully prepared for a return to school in September and I am very looking forward to leading the new school in this next exciting chapter. Please use the information above to speak with your child and settle any queries that they may have and impress upon them the need for cooperation and good behaviour. We want them all to be **Ready, Respectful and Safe! This will help them to Be Successful at Bryntirion.**

Kind regards and best wishes.

Yours sincerely



DTD Mead (Headteacher)

