

Headteacher/Pennaeth
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Headteacher's Letter Friday 17th February (Letter 11)

Dear Parents/Carers,

This is the eleventh Headteacher's letter of this academic year. I trust these letters are keeping everyone informed about what is happening at Penyrheol School.

Since the last Headteacher's letter, we have had Year 11 photographs, an Energy Council Workshop, Year 11 Music controlled assessments and Year 9 have had their exam week. It is the first time that Year 9 have experienced exams in the theatre and it is great preparation for their GCSE exams in Years 10 and 11. As a year group, they conducted themselves superbly. Years 8 and 10 are having their assessment week this week and interim reports will be shared with parents/carers in the second week back after half term.

Thank you to all parents/carers for your continued support.

Sport

In boys rugby, our Year 10 team beat local rivals Gowerton in the quarter finals of the cup. Bishopston stand between us and a place in the final. Good luck, lads! Year 7 have defeated Gwyr in a very entertaining game in which we scored 6 tries to Gwyr's 4.

We are also very proud of a number of our pupils that are having success in sport outside of school. Jonny Davies, Dylan Davies, Ioan Howells and Bailey Porter have all been representing Swansea Schools Boys rugby this season and they have all been playing very well for the team.

We have three Year 11 pupils representing the Ospreys U16s. We are very proud of George Davies, Emrys Jones and Reuben Hall for being selected. Reuben has the honour of being the captain of the team.

In Girls Rugby, our Year 11 pupil Layla Kerr will captain the Ospreys U18s this weekend against the dragon. What an amazing achievement for Layla. 'Pob lwc' to all of our pupils!

Standards

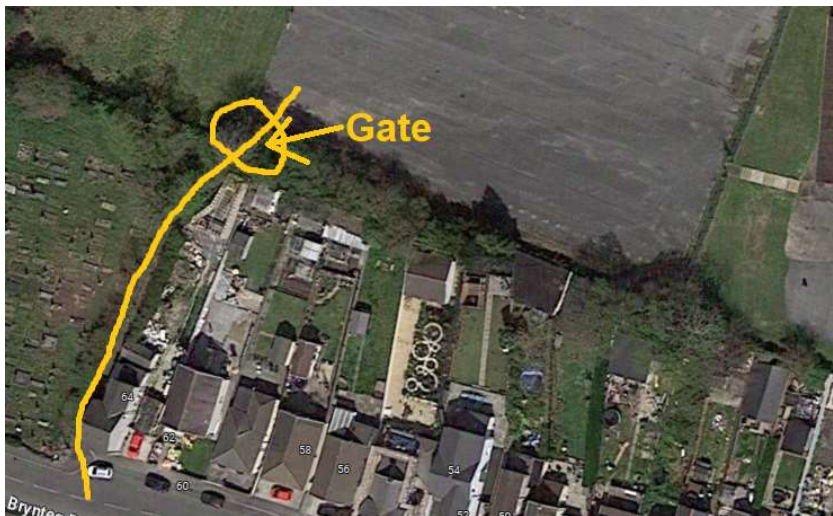
Attendance for the last 2 weeks has risen slightly to 87.7% If you want to know your child's attendance, the ClassCharts App has all the details. As always, if your child can be in school, please ensure that they attend.



Gydihw Lane

Gydihw Lane is the lane leading from the side of the school to Brynteg Road (as shown in the aerial photo below). There are two important changes that I want all parents/carers to be aware of. The first is that every day there will be a member of the Senior Leadership Team at the lane from 8:20am until 8:40am when school starts. There will also be a member of the same team at the lane from 3:00pm to 3:15pm. This extra supervision will help pupils who arrive and leave school via the lane to do so in a calm and safe environment.

The other change is that the gate at the end of the lane (see picture) will be locked at 8:40am every day. At the moment, it is locked some time after 9:00am and for safeguarding reasons, it will now be locked earlier. I am sure I have the support of all parents/carers with these two changes.



School Strikes

The industrial action that was planned for February 14th was postponed. It has been provisionally postponed until Thursday 2nd March. There is no indication yet as to whether the strike will go ahead or not. When we know more, we will communicate to parents/carers straight away.

Mobile Phones

Our current mobile phone policy states that pupils can use their phones before school and at break and lunch. We do not allow pupils to have their phones out during lessons or between lessons. Most pupils access ClassCharts on their phones and this is useful to see their timetable, their behaviour/achievement points and their homework tasks during the school day. We are certainly seeing fewer instances of pupils having their mobile phones out in class. However, we are still picking up lots of pastoral issues which are caused by pupils having their phones accessible in school. This is almost always related to our pupils' use of social media.

I have recently visited a number of Swansea schools where they have a "no mobile phones" policy. Each school has said that they implemented this policy to improve pupils' wellbeing. In all of the schools I visited, nearly all pupils bring their mobile phones to school as they need them for safety reasons when they walk or get bussed in and out of school at the start and the end of the day. However, once pupils are on site, they are not allowed their phones out at any time during

the school day. Parents/carers phone the school if they need to contact their child. Each school has reported that implementing the policy was straightforward. What surprised me was that pupils in these schools have said they are happy with the no mobile phone policy. Pupils have 6 hours a day when they are not on their phones and their social media accounts- they report that this has positively impacted their wellbeing. Staff report that the pupils' focus in lesson has improved since the policy was introduced. Every school has stated they could never see themselves going back to a policy which allowed mobile phones in their schools. Most schools that have banned phones use ClassCharts just as we do at Penyrheol. They make sure that all pupils have a hard copy of their timetable and year group timetables are displayed all around the school.

I would be very interested to hear the views of our community. We recognise that pupils might need their phones as they walk to and from school and any "no mobile" policy would always recognise this. But should we look to have a policy which gives our pupils a break from their phones and their social media accounts for 6 hours a day? Mobile phones have lots of benefits but they also have a number of aspects which can impact on pupils' wellbeing as well as their ability to focus. Or do you feel that our current policy is the right one? I would really value your views. Please leave anonymous feedback by clicking on the following link:

<https://forms.office.com/e/vyzc8jbqFN>

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "D Benney".

Damian Benney
Headteacher

Appendix

What's happening in the next two weeks:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
Monday 27 th February	School Council Meeting (this week)
Tuesday 28 th February	
Wednesday 1 st March	Year 9 Initial Option Deadline Eisteddfod (Years 7 & 8) Lessons 1-4
Thursday 2nd March	World book Day
Friday 3 rd March	
Monday 6 th March	Year 11 Geography GCSE Field Trip (1 day this week)
Tuesday 7 th March	Transition Year 6 HA Maths Challenge
Wednesday 8 th March	Year 9 'Have a Go' Enterprise Evaluation (12:20pm)
Thursday 9 th March	Interim Reports Issued for Years 8 and 10 Health and Wellbeing (Lesson 1)
Friday 10 th March	GCSE PE Moderation