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A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADMASTER

Happy New Year

I hope you all had a pleasant Christmas.

Here we are again at the beginning of another new year - which is bound to be as equally busy as the last.

May I wish you all a happy and successful new year.

Kind regards,

Dylan Minnice (Headmaster)

This bulletin is available on the school website -

<http://ysgolbotwnnog.org/eng/newyddion.html>

CONTACTING SCHOOL

You can contact school in several ways:

☎ **01758 730220**

✉ **pennaeth@botwnnog.gwynedd.sch.uk**

or use the online contact form on the school's website www.ysgolbotwnnog.org/eng/cysylltu.php

HOLIDAYS AND TRAINING DAYS

The dates for half term holidays are **February 15th - 23rd**.

Easter holidays' dates are **April 4th - April 19th**.

Please note that this year's May Day Bank Holiday is on **FRIDAY, May 8th**.

PARENT / TEACHER MEETINGS

Parent/teacher evenings have been arranged on the following dates, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. We will contact you before each meeting to see if you intend to be present. These are very important meetings in order to check on your son/daughter's progress.

Year 9 (including year 10/11 choices) Extended meeting 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.			
Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
January 21	May 19	May 5	February 25

YEAR 10 AND 11 INTERNAL EXAMINATION DATES

Year 11 mock examinations..... February 6 - 13

Year 10 internal exams April 22 - 28

YEAR 11

The next two terms are crucial for Year 11 pupils as they prepare for their GCSE examinations and as they plan their future.

EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

Year 11 will be sitting **EXTERNAL** examinations (which **WILL** count towards their final grades) during the two terms.

You will receive a personalised draft timetable for the May/June exams during the parents' evening on February 25. The general GCSE timetable is available on the school website on the '**Pupils**' page.

JANUARY - YEAR 11

Science Practical Examination January 20—23

Welsh Language (oral - set 1) January 21

FEBRUARY - YEAR 11

Physical Education (GCSE - practical - terminal assessment) January 27/29

Physical Education (GCSE - external moderation) February 25

MARCH/APRIL - YEAR 11

Drama practical GCSE Exam March 9 (technical and dress rehearsals March 2-6)

Art exam (* see below) March 16 and 17

Food and Nutrition Practical Examination March 17 (for those not doing Art) and 24 (for those doing Art)

Welsh - Literature (Unit 3—Oral) April 1 (Foundation) / 2 (Higher)

Welsh Second Language Oral U1: April 21, U2: April 28

French—Oral (to be confirmed) April 22/23

* Pupils have already been given the Art exam paper and have started on the preparation work for the final exam which takes place on the above dates. The preparation work is worth 40% of the exam mark.

CONTROLLED ASSESSMENTS (Coursework)

Controlled Assessments (previously called coursework) are important in most GCSE subjects. They count between 20% and 60% of the final mark in almost every GCSE subject. It is therefore important to ensure that they are completed to the highest possible standard so as to aim for as high a grade as possible in the GCSE. These are held throughout Years 10 and 11 in various subjects - from first lesson in Year 10 until May in Year 11. Most of these have to be completed within a specific number of hours under the supervision of a teacher - so if your son/daughter is absent from lessons then they will have to catch up, at lunchtime or after school.

YR 11 MOCK EXAMINATIONS - FEBRUARY 6 - 13

Year 11's mock exams will take place in the period **February 6 - 13**.

French oral mock exams—Thursday, January 30 and Monday, February 3.

HOMEWORK CLUB

Every Monday and Wednesday from 3:30 to 5:00 there is an opportunity for pupils to stay at school in the Library and Resource Centre to complete work. A member of staff will be available to help them if needed.

Arrangements can be made for your son / daughter to stay in the homework club by contacting the school .

WORK / COACHING ROOM

Pupils can take the opportunity to work at break / lunch in the Library or the Resources Room where they can get support from a staff member if they are struggling with their work.

YEAR 11 PARENTS' MEETING

A parents' meeting has been arranged for Year 11 on February 25th. This will be the last official opportunity to discuss your son/daughter's work with the teachers including the mock examination results.

YEAR 11 - NEXT YEAR...

Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor/Menai's prospectus will be handed out to Year 11 pupils this term. A representative from the college will be visiting school to discuss making an on-line application for college and will also be present in February's parents' meeting. There will also be an opportunity to apply for apprenticeships.

In the meantime, if they are unsure about their options, your son/daughter can request an appointment to discuss next year's options with **Mrs Nia Parry - the school's Careers Wales Advisor**.

You should receive information about open events at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor and Menai directly from the colleges. Further information about these events are contained in the prospectus and also on their website:

www.gllm.ac.uk/events

where you can register your interest in attending.

Summary:

Information Evening **Pwllheli**: January 29 (17:00-19:00)

Information Evening **Bangor/Parc Menai**: February 4 / June 16 (17:00-19:00)

Information Evening **Dolgellau**: January 16 (17:00-19:00)

Information Evening **Llangefni**: February 13 / June 18 (16:30-19:00)

Information Afternoon **Glynllifon**: March 4 (15:00-17:00)

SUPPORT FOR YOUR SON / DAUGHTER

At Ysgol Botwnnog we strive to provide the best care to every pupil and if your son/daughter is having a difficult time or have difficulties with work or welfare problems then we have a number of experts who can help them:

Mr Aled WilliamsDeputy Headmaster / Welfare

Mrs Alaw Jones Japheth Girls' Welfare

Mr Eurig Davies & Miss Ffion Jones.....Special Education Needs Coordinators

Mrs Carol Pilling & Mrs Ann James.....Learning Coaches / Mentors

Ms Julie Bulman..... School Nurse

Ms Deneise Jones Counsellor

Mrs Carys HughesAuthority's Education Welfare Officer

If you would like us to refer your son/daughter to one of the above then please contact Mr Aled Williams.

SUPPORTING YOUR SON/DAUGHTER WITH SCHOOL WORK

- Show an interest in your child's school work and give support according to what he / she needs. Remember that good attendance is essential - do not organise holidays during the school term.
- Discuss what has been going on every day and how you can help.
- Look at your child's books to understand what work is being done. Help with learning by asking questions about the work.
- Ask about your child's work/homework and set rules regarding its completion.
- Talk with your child about expectations, what are their hopes regarding grades, and where would they like to continue their education/training. Encourage your child to do his/her best and to aim high.
- Make sure your child has a quiet place to do schoolwork. Try to make sure that things like phones/computers/television don't disrupt your child doing schoolwork.
- Help your child to organize the work, giving enough time to prepare for tests and examinations.
- Try to understand the importance of controlled assessments and examinations to the structure of the GCSE courses. Make sure you know when there are tests, assessments and examinations. We will inform you of these in the school bulletin and via e-mail.
- Attend parents' meetings to discuss your child's work with the teachers.
- If you are unsure about anything, or need advice please contact the school to talk to Mr Dylan Minnice or Mr Aled Williams.

ATTENDANCE

You have received your son/daughter's attendance statistics on last term's interim report. We sympathize with any pupils who were ill in the run up to Christmas when there was significant illness in the locality. Nevertheless, it's pleasing to report that a quarter of the pupils missed less than one day of school last term and that 51 pupils didn't miss a single day—well done!

Everyone's target for the year is attendance of at least 96%. This means not missing more than 8 days of school during the year.

Percentage	100%	97%+	96%+	93%+	90%+	85%+	Less than 85%
Description	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Adequate	Causing concern	Needs attention	Unsatisfactory
Days missed	0	No more than 6 days	No more than 8 days	No more than 13 days	No more than 19 days	No more than 29 days	More than 29 days

APPLICATION FOR FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Directives from the Welsh Assembly via the Local Authority regarding the authorisation of school holidays during term time has changed. In order for us to authorise any holiday during term time parents need to make a **written application to school before going on holiday.**

The school's Governing Body has discretionary powers, which have been deputed to the management team, to authorise term time holidays. This will depend on the length of the absence and any previous holidays, the pupil's current attendance rate, the time of year, the effect on the pupil's educational progress and any disruption to assessments / examinations. No more than 5 days of holiday will be authorised in any school year for pupils in years 7-9.

If we are unable to authorise holidays beforehand then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised on the pupil's record.

WE CAN NOT AUTHORISE HOLIDAY ABSENCES DURING YEARS 10 AND 11 AS IT IS BOUND TO HAVE AN EFFECT ON YOUR SON/DAUGHTER'S PROGRESS, UNLESS THERE ARE VERY EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

ABSENCE—INFORMING US

To ensure that everybody who should be in school is present please contact the school on the first morning of absence so that we know if your son / daughter should be here or not.

We ask you to let us know if your son / daughter is absent by calling 01758 730220 between 8:00 and 9:15 .

If the school hasn't received a call by 9:15 telling us why your child is not in school, then we will contact your home or workplace.

ADVERSE WEATHER AND CLOSING SCHOOL

If a situation arises that we have to close school for reasons beyond our control—weather, no electricity or water, etc; we will try to send a text message to every home to inform you. We can text message every home within minutes—so long as we have a valid mobile phone number.

We will also make an announcement on Radio Cymru between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and on the Council website - www.gwynedd.gov.uk

If we have to close school during the day and have to send pupils home for health and safety reasons we will follow these procedures:-

- i. pupils should return home on the school bus (if that is how they come to school)
- ii. pupils should then return to their home or the house of a relative or friend (according to your instructions).

THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION

CRAFT FAIR

The Parents' Association have, once again this year, been busy organising the Craft Fair. The Fair was very successful and over £1200 was raised.

MONEY RAISING CLUB

The Money Raising Club is drawn once a term with a chance of winning up to £100. Are you a member? —£12.00 a year (cheque made payable to school or direct debit order). Details available from Mrs Nerys Williams, the school's secretary - 01758 730220.

CLOTHES RECYCLING

Antur Waunfawr's Clothes recycling bin has also been successful raising over £200 last year. Remember, if you have any clothes to recycle that you can put them in the blue recycling box by the school's car park.

A big thank you to everybody who has supported these ventures. All money raised goes towards purchasing educational resources for the benefit of the pupils.

If you would like to help the Parents' Association, then please contact school or one of the officials.

Officials: Chair - Mrs Glesni Owen; Secretary - Mrs Carys Evans.

RECYCLING SCHOOL UNIFORM

WORKING WITH

Tenovus, Pwllheli has agreed to work with the school to sell pre-worn school uniform. If you have any items of school uniform in good condition that you no longer need, then Tenovus would be pleased to receive them in order to sell on.

YEAR 11'S COFFEE EVENING

Year 11's annual Coffee Evening was once again a huge success this year. In order to raise money a variety of events, including a Halloween Disco, were organised.

Congratulations to the committee on their efforts to raise money in various ways. Over £6500 was raised and has been distributed to charities chosen by the committee including:

Wales Air Ambulance, Cancer Research, Ceri Haf Appeal, Little Princess Trust, Pwllheli Hockey Club.

The committee would like to thank everyone who donated items for the coffee evening and to everyone who supported the night in any way.

ESTYN INSPECTION

During last term, Estyn, Wales' school inspectors, spent a week with us inspecting all aspects of school life. Their full report is available on their website and on the school's website.

There is much praise in the report for the pupils and the school's work, as well as a few suggestions for further development as a school. This is Estyn's summary:

"Ysgol Botwnnog is a caring and close-knit community that plays a key part in its local community. Robust leadership has ensured a strong sense of pride and belonging among the school's pupils and staff. It has also led to high standards of wellbeing and high quality teaching.

Nearly all pupils behave excellently and many make valuable contributions to the school and the area through extra-curricular and charitable activities. Pupils' attitudes to learning are a notable strength. They are polite and courteous, and respect the contributions of their peers and teachers during lessons. Pupils have mature and polished social skills. During their time at the school, many pupils make sound progress in terms of their knowledge, understanding and skills.

Providing care and support of the highest quality and a rich range of learning experiences are at the heart of the school's work. Pupils benefit from comprehensive support, robust teaching and a variety of valuable experiences that broaden their horizons and make an important contribution to their Welsh identity."

The school was judged 'good' or 'excellent' in all inspection areas.