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A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADMASTER

Happy New Year

Here we are again at the beginning of another new year - which is bound to be as equally busy as the last. Congratulations to all who competed in the Eisteddfod at the end of last term—it was great to see so many pupils taking part.

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

Kind regards,

Dylan Minnice (Headmaster)

CONTACTING SCHOOL

You can contact school in several ways:

☎ **01758 730220**

✉ **pennaeth@botwnnog.ysgoliongwynedd.cymru**

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

HOLIDAYS AND TRAINING DAYS

Staff training day - **February 17th**.

Half term holidays - **February 18th - 26th**.

Easter holidays' dates are **April 1st - April 17th**.

May Day Bank Holiday is on **MONDAY, May 1st**.

PARENT / TEACHER MEETINGS

Last term we held an online meeting for year 11 parents and one at school for year 7.

We plan to hold face-to-face parent meetings at the school this term on the following dates:

Year 8—Wednesday, January 25th—[you can indicate whether or not you will be attending using this link.](#)

Year 11— March 8th (following the mock exams held in the two weeks before half term—February 6—16)

We will confirm the dates of years 9 and 10 meetings closer to the time.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns then please contact us.

INTERIM REPORT

You should have received an interim report at the end of last term by email and in writing if your son / daughter was present. If you have not received the report then please contact the office.

YEAR 11

The arrangements for this summer's GCSE exams are likely to be back to normal - with some minor adjustments in some subjects.

OFFICIAL EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

Year 11 will be continuing to complete **EXTERNAL** assessments (which **WILL** count towards their final grades) during the next two terms.

We will distribute individual timetables for the May/June exams once we receive confirmation from the examination boards.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY - YEAR 11

English Language (GCSE - Group oral examination)	January 23 & 24
Physical Education (GCSE - practical - terminal assessment - swimming).....	January 25
Physical Education (GCSE - final date for video evidence to be presented).....	January 27
Physical Education (GCSE - practical - terminal assessment)	February 1

MARCH/APRIL - YEAR 11

Physical Education (GCSE - external moderation (to be confirmed)).....	March 7
Art - Practical Exam (Preparation work for the next 10 weeks counts towards the final mark)	March 29 & 30
Welsh - Literature (Unit 3—Oral)	April 20 (Foundation) / 21 (Higher)
Drama practical GCSE Exam.....	March 17
Food and Nutrition Practical Examination	date to be confirmed)
French—Oral.....	April/May (date to be confirmed)

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 and 100% in the Baccalaureate. 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.

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.

YEAR 11 - NEXT YEAR...

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

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**. Mrs Parry will also be present in the parents' meeting.

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

YEAR 10 - EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

Year 10 will be sitting external exams in some subjects this summer:

- **Science** - Double and Triple Awards (all pupils) - 3 exams (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) which each count 15% towards the final grade.
- **Welsh Literature** (Sets 1,2,3) - Unit 2, which counts 25% towards the final grade.
- **English Literature** (Sets 1,2,3) - Unit 2, which counts 40% towards the final grade.
- **English Language** (set 4) - Entry Level—full qualification
- **Welsh Language** (set 4) - Entry Level - full qualification
- **Health and Social Care & Children's Care** - Exam (to be confirmed) - which counts 50% towards the final grade.
- **History** - Mrs Hughes-Jones's group (Depression, War & Recovery) Miss Griffith's group (Germany in transition) which counts 25% towards the final grade.
- **Religious Studies**—Unit 1 - which counts 50% towards the final grade.

SUPPORTING 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 Williams	Deputy Headmaster / Welfare
Mrs Alaw Jones Japheth	Girls' Welfare
Mr Eurig Davies & Miss Ffion Jones.....	Special Education Needs Coordinators
Mrs Carol Pilling & Mrs Susan Jones.....	Learning Coaches / Mentors
Ms Bethan Jones.....	School Nurse
Ms Deneise Jones	Counsellor
Mrs Carys Hughes	Authority'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.
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SCHOOL UNIFORM

Thank you for your support with the school uniform.

I'd like to remind you that leggings, jeggings, combat trousers or track suit bottoms are **NOT** acceptable—only plain black trousers are allowed (including black jeans).

The Tenovus store in Pwllheli is pleased to accept any uniform items in good condition to sell on.

A stock of school clothes with the official badge are available to purchase from the office.

LOST CLOTHES

A pile of clothing has been left behind at school during the last term—they're available in the bottom of the hall to check if there's a missing item there. We will pass any uncollected clothing to local charities at the end of this week.

If you have a problem with being able to purchase the uniform then please contact us to discuss.

ATTENDANCE

Good attendance remains a priority at the School. Despite the situation with so much illness in the community, the attendance of most of our pupils continues to be very good. The attendance of most pupils is over 90% with 30% of pupils with attendance of over 95%.

WHEN SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD AT HOME?

“Public Health experts are reminding parents in Wales to keep children away from school and childcare settings if they are unwell and have a fever, following an increase in illnesses like flu. It’s one of a number of simple steps parents can take to protect their child and to minimise the spread of winter illnesses when children return to schools and nurseries in Wales next week.

Flu and Covid-19 are currently circulating at high levels and an increase in cases of scarlet fever is also being reported.

Children who are unwell with a fever (a high temperature) should stay at home until they feel better and the fever is over.

Dr Graham Brown, Consultant in Communicable Disease Control for Public Health Wales said:

“It is also important to remind children about the importance of washing their hands to avoid germs spreading and to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues.” Full guides can be found on [this link](#).

APPLICATION FOR FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

In order for us to authorise any holiday during term time parents need to make a **written application by letter/ email 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 8:15 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 in the morning, and on the Council website - www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru

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:-

- pupils should return home on their usual school bus (if that is how they come to school) - they can not go on different buses,
- pupils should then return to their home or the house of a relative or friend (according to your instructions).