

Gorwel Addysg Gwybodaeth



Ysgol Gyfun

**PORTHCAWL**

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Comprehensive School

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Headteacher/Prifathro: M. J. Stephens NPQH, P Dip Ed, BA (Hons)

Deputy Headteacher/Dirprwy Brifathrawes: D. W. Beard BA (Hons)

Deputy Headteacher/Dirprwy Brifathrawes: C-A. Painter BA (Hons)

8th September 2023

Dear Parents/Carers,

At the start of the new term, I would like to provide you with an update of news from Porthcawl Comprehensive School. Please treat this letter as a start of term 'Headteacher Newsletter' as I reflect on recent achievements and outline some important information for the year ahead. I hope you have all had an enjoyable summer with family and friends, and that your child is looking forward to the new term ahead. At this time of year, we welcome new families, and I hope that this is the start of a positive relationship together.

### **Examination Results**

I was delighted with this summer's GCSE and A Level examination results and I would like to congratulate all students in last year's Year 11 and Year 13 on their outstanding achievements. It gives me a real sense of pride seeing the young people in our community rewarded for their hard work. Overall, our students have received an outstanding set of results which will ensure they can move on to the next phase of their education and lives. Throughout their time at PCS they have all shown such resilience and determination. I would like to also congratulate the dedicated staff and our families for their hard work and continued support – a sincere thank you.

### **Summer 2023 A Level Results – Success!**

We are very proud of our Year 13 students. Approximately 67% of all grades awarded were A\*-B and 41% of all grades awarded were A\*-A. 78% of students achieved at least 3 or more A Levels graded at A\*-C and just over 26% of students achieved 3 or more A Levels graded at A\*-A grades. In addition, all students achieved the Level 3 Threshold. This year, nearly all students are moving onto university and 50% will be attending a Russell Group University. Our students will be studying a range of degrees including Law, Biology, Architecture, Engineering, Medicine, Design, Physics and Sport – to name a few! Other students have secured or are looking for employment, some have gained apprenticeships, and some have chosen to take time out before continuing their studies or embarking on a career. I wish all students every success for the future and I look forward to welcoming them back to school whenever they are in Porthcawl.

### **Summer 2023 GCSE Results – More Success!**

There has been so many excellent GCSE results this year, we are delighted with the outcomes our students have achieved! Our provisional results from Summer 2023, show that 77% of students achieved five or more GCSEs graded A\*-C including English and Mathematics. Almost 90% of students achieved five or more GCSEs graded A\*-C and all students left school with a recognised qualification. An incredible, near 40% of students achieved five or more GCSEs graded A\*-A grades. In 'Best Literacy', 90% of students achieved an A\*-C grade with 39% of grades awarded at A\*/A. In 'Best Numeracy', 78% of students achieved an A\*-C grade with 41% of grades awarded at A\*-A. In 'Best Science', 82% of students achieved an A\*-C grade with 39% of grades awarded at A\*/A. Incredibly, over 40% of all grades in the core subjects of English, Mathematics and Science were awarded at A\*/A.

In 2023, we have continued to maintain excellent points scores in Literacy, Numeracy and Science, and our Capped 9 points score (a student's best nine GCSEs including English Language and Mathematics) continues to be a very strong. Provisional figures released by the examination board suggest that in English Language and Mathematics the school's A\*-C pass rate is approximately 25% higher than the Welsh average. Excellent achievements I'm sure you'll agree!

Everyone at PCS is incredibly proud of all Year 11 students. However, special congratulations need to be awarded to those students who have shown consistent improvement and high levels of achievement throughout their time at PCS – well done, a bright future awaits! We are really pleased that a high number of students have chosen to return to the Sixth Form to continue their educational journey with us at PCS. In Year 12, we also welcome several new students and I wish them and our new families a warm PCS welcome. Our Sixth Form numbers have grown this year and future projections indicate that our sixth form numbers will continue to grow in 2024-2025.

### **Summer 2023 GCSE Results – Even More Success!**

Our Year 10 students also completed a small number of GCSEs papers, and their performance has been excellent - everyone is immensely proud of their early achievements. There were some excellent module results in Science, History and Welsh 2<sup>nd</sup> Language to name a few. In addition, nearly all students completed the full GCSE in English Literature with over 95% achieving a grade at A\*-C and 40% achieving A\*-A. These results have provided a very strong foundation for Year 11 – my sincere congratulations!

### **Staffing Changes / Updates**

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce Mr David Beard who joins us from Treorchy Comprehensive School in RCT. He has taken up the post of Deputy Headteacher where he will lead Academic Standards & Curriculum across the school – welcome Mr Beard.

The school's senior leadership team is now structured as:

- Mr M. Stephens, Headteacher
- Mr D. Beard, Deputy Headteacher (Standards & Curriculum)
- Miss C-A. Painter, Deputy Headteacher (Wellbeing & Pastoral)
- Miss K. Owens, Assistant Headteacher: Director of Planning and Communications
- Mrs S. James, Assistant Headteacher: Director of Progress
- Mr R. Aldridge, Assistant Headteacher: Director of Studies
- Mrs K. Poole, Seconded to SLT

We also welcome the following new staff:

- Mr S. Howells, Teacher of English & Media Studies
- Dr R. Evans, Teacher of Physics
- Mrs A. Nokes, Part Time Teacher of PE
- Mr P. Croucher, Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer
- Mr J. Peterson, Senior Premises Officer
- Mrs E. Lewis, Senior Science Technician
- Ms S. Owen, Teacher of Mathematics & ICT (maternity cover)
- Miss L. Morris, Teacher of RE (maternity cover)

To all staff, we offer the best of Porthcawl welcomes.

### **Curriculum for Porthcawl**

We are very excited that our Year 7 and Year 8 students will follow the new Curriculum for Wales from September 2023, referred to as the 'Curriculum for Porthcawl' in our school. All subject areas have been busy planning an innovative curriculum to ensure that the knowledge, skills, and experiences delivered are bespoke to Porthcawl and are underpinned by clear concepts, skills and themes. Our curriculum vision is to *"provide all pupils with the*

*knowledge, skills, experiences and desire to thrive in the adult world*” and our strong curriculum planning underpins this work. Mr Aldridge has already delivered the ‘Curriculum for Porthcawl’ launch assemblies to Year 7 and Year 8 and I look forward to visiting students in their lessons and learning.

For detailed information about the Curriculum for Porthcawl please follow this link to our dedicated ‘Curriculum for Porthcawl’ website: <https://www.porthcawlschool.co.uk/curriculum-for-porthcawl/>

By following this link, you will find out what we are aiming to achieve with our curriculum, what this looks like and what your child will learn. Each subject area has produced a ‘Curriculum on a Page’ resource which outlines the key concepts, the learning and the experiences your child will receive and alongside of this you will find helpful information about how we will capture student progress and share this information with you. In addition to this, there will be a range of information videos posted on our school website soon.

During the academic year, further curriculum, learning and teaching updates will be provided by Assistant Headteacher, Mr. Aldridge and assessment updates will be provided by Assistant Headteacher, Mrs. James. If you have any questions regarding the ‘Curriculum for Porthcawl’ you can contact the school and request to speak to Mr. Aldridge.

### **Behaviour for Learning / Expectations**

One of the strengths of our school is the excellent behaviour and attitude displayed by our students. This is created by positive relationships between students and staff, and through the desire of all Porthcawl’s teachers to provide our students with the knowledge, skills, experiences, and desire to thrive in the adult world.

In assemblies this term we will be discussing our expectations for the term ahead which will be centred around our motto of “Perseverance Creates Success”. We will be reflecting on themes within the “Porthcawl Purposes” and reflecting upon the characteristics we expect in the “Porthcawl Pupil”. This year, there will be an increased focus on routines and expectations at PCS. Very simply, the daily habits that we expect – every lesson, every day.

Students of the school are expected to realise that whatever their age, ability and interest, they are also members of the community and should act in a manner which reflects the general well-being of the school.

To do this we actively promote that our students must show respect for:

- Themselves - by being sensible and behaving in a dignified manner.
- Their teachers - by being courteous and conducting themselves in an orderly manner.
- Their elders - by being polite on the way to and from school and being a good neighbour to the people who live near our school.
- School property - by preventing damage to furniture and equipment.

### **School Uniform**

It is very important that students arrive in full school uniform each morning. If there are any missing or incorrect items of uniform, then your child’s form tutor and/or Head of Year will be in touch so that this can be rectified. If you have any queries regarding uniform, please do not hesitate to contact your child’s Head of Year.

For details and information about School Uniform for 2023-2024 and how we are supporting affordability please see my letter from June 2023: <https://www.porthcawlschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/School-Uniform-Academic-Year-2023-2024-.pdf>

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

A programme of extra-curricular activities will be shared with you as soon as possible. This will be shared with you via our 2023-2024 ‘What’s On’ brochure. This will present the weekly clubs and activities that take place in the school.

## **Social Media**

Follow us on Twitter and Facebook for regular updates on news and events using our Twitter Handle @CompPorthcawl or via Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/porthcawlcomprehensiveschoolofficialpage>. You can also check information regarding PE fixtures, results and sporting success using @porthcawlpe.

## **Parents/Carers Visiting the School**

If you need to visit the school, please use the buzzer entry system at the front of the main reception building. Upon entry, all visitors must report to the main reception. Please note that teaching staff are not generally available during the school day and therefore it is preferable that you telephone or email via [info@porthcawlschool.co.uk](mailto:info@porthcawlschool.co.uk) in advance to make an appointment.

Please can I also ask that parents/carers arriving in and parking vehicles near the school are considerate to our neighbours. Please do not block driveways even if you stay in your car to always allow residents access in and out of their properties.

## **Attendance**

There is a vast amount of educational research that shows a clear link between educational outcomes and attendance to school. Attending school on a regular, punctual basis is one of the most important ways of making sure students get the best possible start in life. We encourage all students to attend school on time, every day, and aim for 100% attendance. I fully understand that children become unwell, and that there can be exceptional circumstances for absences. However, I respectfully ask that you think carefully before keeping your child off school due to the impact attendance can have on attainment levels.

For example, over the course of one year, this is how attendance impacts learning:

- 100% attendance – 0 days missed
- 95% attendance – 2 weeks of learning missed
- 90% attendance – 4 weeks of learning missed
- 85% attendance – 5 ½ weeks of learning missed
- 80% attendance – 7 ½ weeks of learning missed

Porthcawl Comprehensive School is committed to ensuring that every child reaches their full potential, and therefore requires your support in making sure your child's attendance is the highest it could be.

**As we start the school year, please can I ask for consideration of the following:**

- Ensuring that your child arrives at school on time.
- If your child is ill, please contact the school on each day of absence.
- Ensure that where possible, medical appointments are made outside of school time.
- Ensure that holidays are not taken during school time.
- Notify the school as soon as possible of any absence and confirm when your child returns to school.
- Respond to any letters or telephone calls received regarding your child's attendance and punctuality.
- Contact your child's Head of Year if you are experiencing difficulty in getting your child into school.

I hope I have highlighted the importance of regular school attendance and please be reassured that we wish to work closely with all families to ensure that every child is successful with their continuity of learning. We want all students to achieve their full potential. Any absence affects a child's progress in school and regular absence will seriously impact on your child's potential to achieve. Please see the following School Attendance Information from Bridgend County Borough Council: [School attendance - Bridgend CBC](#)

### **School Site / Premises Work**

During the summer break a significant amount of work has been completed across the school site as we continue to upgrade and maintain our facilities. I would like to thank our Site Manager, Mr Parker and our site team who have overseen several contractors and scheduled works over the summer holiday period.

To provide a brief update about some of the works completed:

- An additional classroom / learning area has been created in Ty Enfys.
- A Teaching and Learning Development Hub has been created in M Block.
- Head of Year / Pastoral Offices have been created and this is located in D Block (room D1).
- The school's Duty Officer facility has been moved from Ty Enfys to D Block (opposite room D1).
- A new classroom for literacy and numeracy interventions has been added to P Block.
- New electrics and ceilings have been installed in part of P block.
- Several classrooms (P2 – P6), offices and meeting rooms have been redecorated (P Block).
- A range of new ICT equipment has been installed across the school to include new PCs and interactive screens.

All completed work looks excellent and form part of our continued efforts to ensure the school site is continually modernised and updated to provide the best possible facilities for students and staff. We look forward to more project works scheduled throughout the next 12 months. As our planned projects are completed, I will update.

### **School Improvement Plan 2023-2026**

Our School Improvement Plan (SIP) reflects the needs of all stakeholders, students, parents/carers and staff. The core purpose of the plan and the school is to receive the best educational outcomes for every learner. The plan is also the vehicle by which we deliver the core aims of our school.

For 2023-2026, objectives and priorities within our improvement plan have been determined following the school's self-evaluation of 1. Leadership, 2. Curriculum, Learning and Teaching and 3. Wellbeing, Equity, and Inclusion.

For a summary of our 2023-2026 school priorities please follow link: [School Improvement Plan - Porthcawl School](#)

### **Mobile Phones**

I would like to start the term by highlighting mobile phone use on the school premises and to ask for your support in ensuring your child clearly understands the rules and expectations with regards to mobile phone use at Porthcawl Comprehensive School.

As outlined in our School Code of Behaviour for Students, mobile phones used during school time will be confiscated. This includes break, lunchtime and when using the outside recreational areas of our school site. Mobile Phones may be brought to school, but they must remain in each student's bag. For a number of reasons, a student might be granted permission to use their phone however, when this is required, they will be given clear instructions by a member of staff.

There are several reasons why we do not wish students to use their phones during the school day:

- Phones are distracting when in lessons;
- We want students to focus on their learning;
- We wish to ensure robust safeguarding of students and staff;
- Social media is the cause of many friendship and self-esteem problems;
- The internet has adult content which can be used inappropriately; and
- We encourage students to talk and socialise with their friends at break and lunchtime.

I ask that you remind your child for the period of time they are on the school site; their phone should be switched off and remain in their bag. Confiscated phones can be collected at the end of the day from the reception area. Repeated confiscation will require parents/carers to collect their child's phone from school. Please also note that

the same applies to earpods/headphones that are connected to electronic devices. Inappropriate use of mobile phones, social media and the recording and distribution of videos can result in fixed-term exclusion from school.

### **Keeping you informed**

As a school we aim to keep you informed about your child and any events taking place. This is done through Sims Parent App which is used to communicate a wide range of information. It is vital that your contact information is accurate, and I ask all families to keep us informed of any changes to postal addresses, telephone numbers (including mobiles) and email addresses. Registration details for the Parent App will be provided in due course by our Data Manager, Mrs Ashpole.

### **INSET Days 2023-2024**

There are six INSET days for the academic year 2023-2024.

The dates are as follows:

<b><u>Autumn Term 2023</u></b>	<b><u>Spring Term 2024</u></b>	<b><u>Summer Term 2024</u></b>
Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2023 Monday 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> January 2024 Friday 8 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2024 Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2024

The term dates for schools across Bridgend can also be accessed here:

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/term-dates/>

I look forward to continuing the strong partnerships between families and the school. As you know this is especially important in enabling children to achieve success and so I ask for your full support of all school policies and for your continued proactive involvement in your child's education.

I shall provide further updates as we work through the new term. Here's to another year of success at Porthcawl Comprehensive School.

Kind regards,

Mike Stephens

M Stephens  
Headteacher