

Dear parents/carers

Re: Headteacher Update November 2023

A warm welcome back to the second half term of the year. We are looking forward to working with all our young people and their families during this busy seven-week half term.

MND Day

I am over the moon to report that our MND awareness event raised £4050 towards Jason Bowen's treatment. The Bowen family were incredibly grateful for all your generous donations. Thank you so much for your support of this very special cause.

Monday 13th November – please wear odd socks

Monday 13th November marks the start of anti-bullying week. At Caerleon Comprehensive we would like to join in with the wearing of odd socks to mark the start of this important week. No donations are being requested for this but we are encouraging staff and students to wear odd socks on this day.

Attendance

Each half term, we will be sending out an attendance communication, reminding families how vitally important it is that their child is in school every day they possibly can be. If you require any support with your child's attendance, or have any queries or concerns, please do view our cluster attendance policy on the website (this policy applies to the schools in the Caerleon cluster: Langstone Primary School; Lodge Hill Primary School; Charles Williams C/W Primary School and Caerleon Comprehensive School), or contact our Family Engagement Officer via the school email address.

3G Pitch Update

You will be aware that our new 3G pitch is up and running for use in lesson time. We were delighted to be awarded grant funding to enable us to resurface the pitch we had, which was very much coming to the end of its life. Sadly, the new pitch does not allow for the playing of hockey. We are currently looking into alternative ways we can keep this sport going at Caerleon. We will keep families updated with any news in this area. In order for students to gain optimum use of the new 3G pitch, it would be ideal if they had the correct footwear. The PE department have advised that all students require 'mouldies' for the pitch. These are firm ground (FG) boots or moulded sole boots (mouldies). The stud must be plastic, not metal, so that the safety of the students is maintained. These are available from sports shops but the PE department have also advised that they can be obtained at a reasonable cost online from discount stores etc. We appreciate that this is an added cost for families and if anyone needs support with this, please contact your child's head of year in the first instance.

Canteen Queues

Those of you who have visited the school know that we are sadly not blessed with a huge canteen area for our students. Years 7-10 can use the main canteen at breaktime and lunchtime, where there are two queues (one for pasta/light snacks and one for the main meal offered). They can also access lighter snacks/sandwiches etc at the snack shack on the Isca yard. Students in Y11-13 are able to use Coffee Gwaith at lunchtime (and at any time of the day if the student is in Y12/13). Despite the above provision, we understand that queues remain long in the main canteen. At our recent parent forum, one suggestion was that we release different year groups 10 minutes early for

lunch on a rota basis to see if this helps with this situation. Staff and students agreed that this was worth trying; we are therefore proposing the following rota:

Y7 – Monday and Friday; Y8 – Tuesday; Y9 – Wednesday; Y10 – Thursday

As the queue is much shorter for Coffee Gwaith, Y11 do not need to be released early. We will be explaining to the students that in some lessons, where there may be a test for example, the teacher may not be able to release them early on their set day, but that in general this will be the plan.

Toilets

At the recent parent forum some questions about toilet use were raised. We try to encourage students to use the toilet at breaktimes and lunchtimes, but if a student is desperate to use the toilet outside of these times, they should ask their teacher. F block toilets are open during lesson time for students to use. We have also employed a full-time cleaner to monitor and maintain the toilets for our students.

Homework

With the school's recent switch to Hwb, some teachers are setting work via Google Classroom within Hwb, and some via Teams within Hwb. We are currently working on a comprehensive homework policy that will be shared with all families. The policy will include a 'how to guide' to show families how to access their child's Google Classroom within Hwb or Teams within Hwb. It will explain how to check if your child has homework and be aware of when that homework is due in. We aim for the draft version of this policy to be sent home to you in the coming weeks to enable you to feedback, before the final version comes into action in January 2024.

Laptop Library

As part of our focus on supporting all students during the cost-of-living crisis, we have recently set up a laptop library. Any student can borrow a laptop to take home with them to complete schoolwork (up to a maximum of one week). Students who wish to borrow a laptop should go to the IT office (A floor) to sign a laptop out with Mr Powe, our IT technician. Please do complete our digital exclusion survey, which will be sent to you soon, to enable us to ascertain the extent of digital exclusion in our school.

Decoration

As part of our continued focus on improving the learning environment, I'm delighted to share with you that both E block and Isca block were repainted over half term. The decorating team haven't quite finished their work and will be using evenings and weekends to continue this. The blue panels on the outside of the ABC block have also been turned burgundy and the windows were given a very thorough clean! Though we have limited funds, we are doing whatever we can to ensure the learning environment is as pleasant as it can be for our students.

Professional Learning

It is important that families know what staff do during the allocated 6 inset days across the year. These inset days are crucial in giving staff time to focus on our school improvement priorities. Our improvement priorities are all focused around our 'Maximising Potential' motto. You can view our improvement priorities on our website, here: [The first INSET day of the year \(in September\)](#) was spent refreshing our safeguarding training; looking at strategies to support attendance and wellbeing; as well as refreshing our focus on cross curricular skills in lessons. We

have two INSET days during this half term, **Monday 27th November** and **Friday 22nd December**. In lieu of these days, all teaching staff have been accessing online modules called 'Thinking Differently for Disadvantaged Learners'. One of our school improvement priorities is to raise the attainment of students who may be impacted by poverty. Later in the year, I will update you on the other three INSET days and our plans for their use.

Governing Body Annual Report to Parents for 2021-2022

This report is produced annually for parents and is from the Governing Body of the school. It can be found in the 'Information' section of our website. Please note that we are still working in the background on some areas of our new website, including our prospectus. We will let families know as further information is added.

PTA (FOCCS) Christmas Fair and Christmas Concert

Our hardworking PTA have set up a Christmas Fair, which will be running before the Christmas concert 4pm-6pm on the 12th December. Please do join us to support this event, and for our concert afterwards in the newly decorated main hall at 6pm.

I hope you have found this update useful. Please be sure to check the school calendar on our website as there are lots of other dates for your diaries in the coming weeks. I will write to you again in December with my usual update.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L Purcell

Headteacher.