

29th January 2021

Update from the Headteacher

Dear Parent/Carer,

You will I'm sure have noted the First Minister's announcement earlier today confirming that blended learning provision will remain in place for our learners until at least February half term. Whilst there was reference to there being a phased approach to some pupils returning after the half term break, specifically the youngest Primary students, we have been assured that schools should expect at least two weeks-notice for this so I do not expect there to be any change for secondary students until at least two weeks after the half-term holiday; as always I will update you as soon as I am in receipt of further information.

In the meantime, I am pleased to update you with continued very good progress of our young people in this period of lockdown. Those of you who follow the school, our departments and myself on twitter, will see daily, often hourly posts of the innovative ways in which our young people continue to engage in varied, creative lessons and it has been such a boost to receive incredibly positive feedback from so many of you about the consistent quality of our blended learning provision. Similarly, it has been very helpful to receive such positive feedback from our pupils on how much they have enjoyed re-engaging with their form groups on Monday and Friday mornings; some of the motivational challenges being set by our staff never fail to amaze me and I'm thrilled to see such positive family engagement within some of these tasks.

Promoting learner voice has always been a very high priority within our school community and I'm pleased to report that many of our 'Listening to Young People' groups have continued to meet virtually in recent weeks to review topics such as blended learning provision, how to stay motivated and look after one's wellbeing. The 'Behaviour for Learning' Council recently agreed on sending postcards home to those young people who have been more reluctant to engage in lessons; personal messages from pupils to pupils to say that 'they have been missed' – such a kind and thoughtful gesture from our young people.

Following on from the Education Minister's announcement regarding the summer exams series being cancelled, I'm hugely grateful to Miss Greentree, Mr Ford and Mr Powell for delivering informative and reassuring assemblies to Years 10, 11 and the sixth form yesterday and I know that many of our young people found the follow-up Q&A session with their form tutors this morning also beneficial. Further to this, Mr Maughan will be sending out bespoke video messages for parents/carers of pupils in examination years to accompany data reports, to ensure that you have as much support as possible in understanding the processes your child will go through in the next few months.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere thanks to those staff working on site continuing to facilitate such important provision for our more vulnerable learners and those who need additional learning support. This team also includes our fabulous site and cleaning staff who are collectively doing a brilliant job keeping our young people and staff as safe as possible; we are hugely grateful to the team for clearing the grounds of snow at the start of the week. Speaking of which, I very much hope that you managed to squeeze in time to enjoy those precious moments with your families to take a walk in the snow, build a snowman or even get the skis out which I saw in one fabulous picture posted to us!

Whilst I fully appreciate, following today's Welsh Government announcement that the road ahead is a long one, there is certainly light at the end of the tunnel; we must remain positive as a school community that we are doing absolutely everything possible to support our young people and I feel incredibly proud of the way in which we continue to work together to look after them and each other.

Have a lovely weekend.

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Victoria Lambe
Headteacher