



IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALL PARENTS / GUARDIANS

Recently a knife was found on a school bus. After some investigation the school was able to trace its owner. Although it was a vicious looking implement it was eventually established that it had been purchased by the parent who had made it clear that it should not have been brought into school. Possession of such a knife would almost certainly have resulted in prosecution had it been found by a police officer. Knives or any sharp / pointed objects capable of causing injury **ARE NOT** to be brought into school: any breach of this rule will result in serious disciplinary action as has occurred in the past.

As a precaution the school decided to search the bags of all pupils last week and although no knives were found, several pupils were found carrying scissors and one a craft knife. In future teachers will provide this equipment in lessons, if it is required. **Pupils are not to bring scissors or craft knives into school.** Random bag searches will be carried out as required by teachers: a whole school search will hopefully be a rare event but if necessary it will be carried out if the evidence justifies it.

SCHOOL POPULATION AND ACCOMMODATION

This year has seen another increase in the pupil population; my concerns about the capacity of the school's buildings and the adequacy of resources to cope with 1370 pupils have been partially met. The council is examining plans to improve accommodation for sixth form students and children with special education needs in 2006-7. I hope to report in the spring newsletter about the outcome of these discussions. As usual with projects of this nature the initial analysis of costs has proved to be an underestimate!

Once again I have asked the governing body to review the school's standard admission number which is currently 220 for each of Years 7-11. Nearly all year groups are at or close to the standard admission number which is putting great pressure on space and class sizes. Again, I will report later on this issue once we have had an indicative budget for 2006-7 and the governors have held their autumn term meeting.

ADVANCE NOTICE OF POST-16 MEETINGS

The school will, as usual, provide information about the sixth form for students in Year 11 and their parents in meetings at the beginning of next term. The school is piloting the Welsh Baccalaureate in the sixth form.

On Tuesday 10th January Mr. Davey and Mr. Gilbey will give an explanatory talk to students in Year 11 during assembly and period 1. A similar presentation will be made to parents of Year 11 pupils in the Main Hall at 7.30 p.m. There will be plenty of opportunity for questions and discussions.

YEAR 10 COURSEWORK

This week all Year 10 pupils will have received a letter regarding coursework which includes advice on undertaking coursework and gives all the subject deadlines. Please ensure that you, as parents, keep this letter in a safe place for future reference.

BAD WEATHER AND SCHOOL CLOSURE

This year we have had several dire warnings that this winter is going to be particularly severe. Although I have included this warning in previous newsletters it is still the case that several pupils still do not have a valid contact number on school records.

The decision to close the school is never easy and it is not a decision taken lightly but the following factors are taken into account:

- ❑ a significant number of staff (both teaching and non-teaching) live outside the town and it is impossible to run a normal timetable with a high percentage of staff absent or late
- ❑ a significant number of pupils come to school by bus. Once bad weather sets in some of the bus companies will want to set off early. As they are responsible for the health and safety of pupils on the journey it would be reckless to overrule them. It is not difficult to envisage a situation where some children would be stranded if the buses were not available. Disruption is also caused to teaching if a significant number of pupils do not arrive in the morning because of poor weather conditions affecting bus routes.
- ❑ any decision is taken with Ysgol Penweddig as both schools share the same transport.

Although closures are rare parents need to be aware of the following:

- ❑ Penglais and Penweddig will put a message on Radio Ceredigion (103.3-97.4-96.6 FM) by 8.00 a.m. if the school is to close.
- ❑ The Penglais answering machine will contain an information message if the school is going to close or is definitely known to be closing the next day.
- ❑ All pupils **MUST** have left a valid contact number on school records so that we can keep parents informed. **DESPITE REPEATED PLEAS** some pupils still do not have this number. It is needed, in any case, for a medical emergency. Please could all parents check with us that we have an up to date contact number.
- ❑ Please make sure that your son / daughter knows what to do in the event of an early closure. Some pupils, especially younger ones, have no idea what they should do in the event of an emergency closure.

SUDAN APPEAL

As part of their effort to raise money for the Sudan appeal, 11CW are collecting mobile phones for recycling. Unwanted mobiles should be taken to C4 at break or lunchtimes. They can be in any condition and do not have to be in working order.

Mr. Dennis (Head of Maths) and his wife are also raising money for the Sudan by doing something a bit different. For details visit <http://philsudan.blogspot.com> and find out more!

Concert Tour to Germany



MUSIC

Concert Tour to Germany October 2005 – Almost eighty pupils took part in the Music department Concert Tour to Germany, giving four performances in as many days. The first performance took place in Cologne Cathedral where the choir sang the evening service. Many of us will long remember the wonderful sound of the choir's voices ringing around this awe-inspiring building. The two following concerts took place in Bernkastel and Bad Berdrich. Items performed by the instrumental groups and choirs were well received by appreciative audiences which included some of the pupils' parents. The final concert was given at the beautiful Johanneskirche in Kronberg. The church was full and the audience gave us such a warm welcome, obviously enjoying each of the items performed.

Despite the fact that we were kept so busy giving concerts, there was plenty of time to enjoy ourselves. Visits included a day spent at Phantasialand Theme Park, a river trip on the Rhine followed by a ride on the cable car over the vineyards at Rudesheim. We were also able to visit the winery at Traben Trarbach and enjoy some sightseeing and souvenir shopping in Cochem.

On music tours the evening entertainment after returning to the hotel poses no problem. The entertainment is home grown with the instrumentalists and singers joining in, along with quiz night courtesy of Mr. Alan Phillips (and a few of the brass players) and a great disco and awards night organised by the sixth formers.

A special thank you is due to all the pupils involved for their hard work in preparing their performances so thoroughly for the tour and for their resilience and determination in making sure that each performance was a great success. Despite long journeys by bus, there were no complaints, everyone was simply determined to enjoy themselves.

Finally, heartfelt thanks are due to the amazing team of teachers that accompanied us on the tour. Their unstinting help and support throughout the tour was invaluable.

MATHEMATICS

Many activities took place during Maths Week Cymru. Perhaps the most amazing individual performance was that of Isabella Ashford, a Year 7 pupil, who not only won the Year 7 final of the 24 Game but went on to win the whole school final against very stiff competition. The girls also proved to be very successful in a Su Doku competition. In the final Arthur Rowlands (Year 10) was beaten by Elinor Thorogood (Year 9). Congratulations to all who took part.



PSHE

Penglais School found itself at the centre of an international crisis last Friday 18th November as part of a Ministry of Defence education programme. Penglais was the latest school in Wales to take part in the new Ministry of Defence Schools Initiative, a programme jointly devised by the MoD and the Department of Education. During the visit, pupils had to deal with a 'global crisis', based on a real life scenario. They took on roles such as the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Defence or Chief Press Officer and then held a mini Cabinet meeting culminating in a live press conference.

Aimed at Year 11 pupils, the initiative provided a unique opportunity to teach students about Government, citizenship, democracy and world affairs as part of Personal, Social and Health Education.

The day's programme involved a series of presentations, discussion groups and role play, run by a team consisting of representatives of each of the Armed Forces and the Civil Service. The aim was to raise awareness amongst pupils about the importance of their responsibilities as citizens, focusing on such things as the role and function of a Government department (in this case the MoD), humanitarian aid, ethnic diversity, human rights, veterans, conflict resolution and crisis situations.



Sue Scarlett, the Defence Schools Presentation Team Manager for Wales and South West England added: “This initiative has nothing to do with Armed Forces recruitment; it’s about educating children in the ways of the world. We’re giving them an insight into the realities of running a Government and handling crisis situations, and helping them to grasp what it actually means to be a British citizen and the unique role that Britain plays on the world stage.

There is a great mix of politics, geography, history and social science throughout the day which all fits in well with the National Curriculum. Of course it’s good fun too – both pupils and teachers would agree that this provides a refreshing break from the more traditional academic subjects.”

The Presentation Team were delighted by the response of the Year 11 pupils. One representative from the RAF said, “We have delivered this programme to schools across the United Kingdom at comprehensive, public and selective grammar schools. The pupils in Year 11 at Penglais were the most mature, well motivated group we have encountered and are a credit to themselves and the school.



NVQ CUSTOMER CARE

Here are some of our Year 10 Customer Care students working on their NVQ files. These pupils attend work experience every Monday morning and return to the classroom in the afternoon. They are Katharine Harris, Catherine Busby, Seren Williams, Carys Price-Walker, Paige Connor, Jessie Knights and Joanne Evans.

NEW INITIATIVE FOR PUPIL REVIEWS

Twice during the academic year all pupils in Years 7-11 have an opportunity of an academic review with their Form Tutors. At these meetings the pupils discuss their progress with Form Tutors and set targets for improvements.

On Fridays 11th and 18th November the reviews took place as normal with the exception of Year 7. Parents were, for the first time, given the opportunity to be present at their child's review to both observe and take part in the process.

The experiment proved a success and the school will give parents of pupils in other year groups the same opportunity in the future. It allows parents to be more involved in their child's education and to witness how pupils and teachers discuss academic matters and set appropriate targets.

FUTURE CHEF 2006



The school heats for this competition have recently taken place with Year 10 pupils as well as Year 11 pupils taking part this year. Standards were extremely high and the overall winner was Leanne Gornall from Year 11. She went on to represent the school in the local finals in Newtown on Monday 21st November where she performed extremely well. Well done Leanne.

We must extend our thanks to Chris from Harry's Restaurant in Aberystwyth who has given so much of his time helping all the catering students over the past few months. We are extremely grateful to him for his continued support.

Children in Need Fundraising at Penglais



PTA AUTUMN FAIR



Once again many thanks to everyone who was able to support the annual PTA Autumn Fair which never fails to raise substantial funds for the school. This year nearly £3,000 was added to PTA funds which will support worthwhile school projects. The PTA Committee deserves special thanks for preparing the event. The raffle saw keen competition between forms to sell tickets. This year 7MW sold the most with 7CS and 8GP as runners up. The next PTA event is the Curry and Quiz night on Friday 3rd March 2006. More details to follow.



FOOTBALL SUCCESS FOR STEFANO ANTONIAZZI

Following a series of intensive trials earlier this year, talented sportsman Stefano Antoniazzi, Year 13, successfully won a Welsh Boys' Club Cap playing in the U18 side in Ayr in Scotland. Stefano was Vice Captain for the match. Congratulations to Stefano on this excellent achievement.

SIXTH FORM AT THE UN - CARMARTHEN

Once again this year, members of the Penglais Sixth Form dominated "CEWC Cymru's" mock UN debate. The event was organised to promote active citizenship, and to inform pupils about the UN's work. Pupils made up delegations from 11 countries of the UN's General Assembly; the International Press, the Secretariat and Oxfam were also represented. The delegates' task was to draft resolutions that would help implement the Millennium Development Goals, a set of eight targets to be met by 2012 which range from funding sustainable environmental policies to empowering women.

Suggestions flew in thick and fast, and as

the day progressed, the resolutions up for discussion became more honed and specific. The most pragmatic country was Mozambique, whose members passed a hat-trick of resolutions. Lauren Babcock, Kirsty Adamson and Holly Jacks led the chamber in promising to distribute mosquito nets and fund research for an AIDS vaccine. Luci Edwards and Peter Horne proved to be very well-informed, and put forward a true representation of Oxfam's stance on many issues. The press, Matilda MacDuff, Amy Perkins and I, were very prolific this year, producing scores of articles which stirred up controversy on a few occasions and influenced debate!

Grace Egan Yr13



MUSIC

Concert Tour to Germany October 2005.

Prince's Trust



Penglais Year 11 xl club at Cardiff Millenium Centre for Prince's Trust Celebration Day.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 25th Nov	INSET DAY
Monday 28th Nov	Year 11 Mock GCSE Examinations begin
Wednesday 30th Nov	Junior Show Singers and the Brass Ensemble play and sing in Llanbadarn
Wednesday 7th Dec	Year 13 Parents' Consultation 3.30
Saturday 10th Dec	Cantorion Penglais perform in Aberystwyth Choral Society's 'Elijah' at the Arts Centre
Tuesday 13th Dec	Music and readings for the Christmas season at Llanbadarn Church at 7.30
Thursday 15th Dec	End of Term Whole School Concert at the Great Hall at 7.30.
Tuesday 20th Dec	Certificates and Presentation Evening Great Hall at 7.30
Wednesday 21st Dec	Carol Services a.m. END OF TERM

Yours faithfully,

H.J. DAVEY Headteacher