

Llais Penglais Ysgol Penglais School newsletter



October 2020

HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE

This term so far has probably been the oddest half term yet. School continues as normal but with some very different features. On the whole, the school is running very smoothly and we have all been hugely impressed with our students in adapting so well to the different expectations made of them. The impact of the three-lesson day, the staggered breaks and the allocated areas is interesting and the school is overall a very calm place at the moment. We will review the structures over the next half term and it will be interesting to hear what students, staff and parents think of the changes made.

The focus this half term has been very much on establishing new routines, new expectations and new structures. The routines of hand-sanitising and cleaning chairs and tables are now firmly in place and the students have responded well to the need for face-coverings in corridors and for following the one-way system. I think we will probably have the fittest staff and students in the school by the end of this year with the amount of extra walking needed to get around the one-way system! Teachers have been working very hard at ensuring that the 100 minute lessons have enough variety of learning experiences, and that work is chunked into sections that are manageable for students. When I walked around lessons this week, I was very impressed by students' attitude to their learning, their teachers and each other.

Of course, one impact of the current situation is that we can have no visitors in school and we cannot send students out of school on any trips. This does mean that the extra-curricular side of school life is currently much reduced, as you will see from the limited content of this newsletter. However, we are looking at other ways of doing things and hopefully there will be some virtual events and visits happening next half term. In the meantime, we will keep focusing on ensuring that the school maintains the calm learning environment established in the first half term. Thank you to all students and staff for working hard under challenging circumstances and to parents for supporting. I hope you have a restful half term break before we return to our next challenge of teaching Years 7 and 8 in school and other year groups virtually.

Ms M. Hughes

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH SCHOOL **NEWS VIA SOCIAL MEDIA**

We regularly post on Facebook and Twitter, so why not follow us or join our group to be kept informed with news from the school.

UPDATE US WITH YOUR LATEST CON-TACT DETAILS

Please keep us updated with your contact details by writing to, student services or emailing with your new details by contacting admin@penglais.org.uk

IMPORTANT DATES THIS TERM

Last day of school: 23rd October October Half Term: 26th -30th Octo-

Back to School: Week 1 Tuesday 3rd November

Insed Day: Monday 2nd November

Christmas Holiday: 21st December— 1st January



Parent Information

PARENT FEEDBACK

It has been a more different start to the academic year than we are used to however we have received some lovely feedback from our parents and appreciate all your support during these circumstances.

"You're all doing such an amazing job working under very scary and unpredictable circumstances. I feel so grateful to you all at the school for keeping things as normal and supportive as possible for the students, (even though you must be under immense stress and must be so worried yourselves), you're helping them to feel safe and have some predictability in their lives which is so important right now and this is really good for their mental health as well. I can't thank you all enough!"

As you know, this term, on days where students have a PE lesson they are allowed to come to school in their kit. This means that it is more important than ever that they are in the correct PE kit for school.

As described in our policy, and in the school planner, the PE uniform is as follows:

P.E.

- Blue Max Banner Orion Games Top in Navy/Sky with logo, and/or
- Blue Max Banner Orion t shirt in Navy/Sky with logo
- Navy base layer (without logo)
- White cotton t-shirt with Penglais logo
- Black shorts or leggings or tracksuit bottoms.
- Navy and sky sports socks

The games top is long sleeved and designed for sports lessons. Students are also welcome to wear base layers or "skins" in navy. Hoodies are not part of our uniform and should not be worn to school.

As the weather is getting colder we expect to see fewer students wearing shorts – but please remember that shorts should be appropriate for school and in black. Students are welcome to wear black leggings or tracksuit bottoms – but we ask that they do not wear any other colour.

Students in Year 11 **only** will be allowed to wear any navy or black top, without large logos, for PE lessons. This is because they don't have many weeks left as students at Penglais and we understand that they may not have the appropriate kit and won't want to purchase items so close to the end of Year 11.

Thank you for your cooperation with this. Should there be a financial issue that makes this difficult for you please contact your child's Head of Year to discuss.

PARENT REMINDERS:

We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents and students of some of the requirements now in school:

- We have a new gate system in place.
- Parents are not permitted on site.
- Parents are not allowed to bring any items onto the school premises for students.
- Remember to give your child enough water to last them throughout the school day.
- Please name all the items students bring to school including jumpers, ties, coats, lunch boxes
- Students need to remember to wear their face covering when in the corridors and moving around the school.
- If the student has forgotten an item they need either to speak to reception/ student services and provisions will be made for them.

CAREER WALES AWARD

Penglais School has been awarded with a Careers Wales Mark for the school. Processes are in place that enable staff to continually review and improve provision relating to the requirements of the Careers and the World of Work framework, resulting in an enriched learning experience for your learners.

In this difficult economic, climate it is more important than ever to provide engaging and informative careers and work related education programmes for all learners, equipping them with career management skills and preparing them to enter the world of work. As well as the long-term benefits to learners' future lives, there is evidence that good career guidance also brings benefits in the shorter term, while learners are still at school. These benefits include better motivation once learners have clear goals for future study and careers, leading to higher self-esteem, higher attainment and reduced drop-out rates. Therefore we are very pleased to be awarded with this mark.



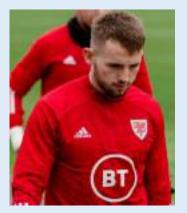




Sports News

We are delighted and tremendously proud to announce that Rhys Norrington-Davies, an ex-student at Ysgol Penglais has been called up to the Wales senior squad for the first time.

Rhys who plays left-back, currently on loan with the Hatters from The Premier League side Sheffield United for the season, has been picked by Ryan Giggs for the friendly against England, and the UEFA Nations League ties against the Republic of Ireland and Bulgaria. Twenty-one-year-old Rhys, who has impressed in his six appearances for the Hatters so far has added a first senior cap to the 14 he already has to his name at under-21 level. Ryan Giggs reported that Rhys is someone he's been keeping an eye on and a player he's really looking forward to seeing, not only for his quality but his character. We are all very proud of his achievements.



Carys, a year 9 student has been selected to play football as part of the Elite North Wales Regional squad. Currently, the squad is training twice a week in Colliers Park, Wrexham in the hope of playing games against Academy Teams and English Clubs in the future.

Carys' hope for the future is to develop her performance and aim to be selected for the Wales U15 squad. We wish her all the best with her training.



National Steering Group Committee for Sport Wales and the Young Ambassador Programme

My name is Jack and I am a Year 13 student. I was appointed as a member of the National Steering Group committee (NSG) and a Platinum Ambassador in July. This role allows me to attend meetings (virtually at the present time) to learn, key skills as a Coach. At each NSG Weekend there is a key word for the weekend and this weekend was 'Inspiration'. On Day 1 in the morning we first got to know each other and did some teamwork skills. In the afternoon we learnt about facilitation and different learning styles. The facilitation workshop involved making a short film telling another Young Ambassador (YA) what it takes to do a great session. We were put into groups and we made a short video trailer with key words to help someone run an inspiring session. After dinner we all watched each other's videos. On day 2 we started by reflecting on the previous day then we learnt about online facilitation and online etiquette. Following this we did some more teamwork activities. After lunch we gained new presentation skills to use when holding online meetings. Before



dinner we then reflected on the NSG Weekend and gave feedback of the day. After dinner we did a quiz as a team. On Sunday we had our YA Steering Group Meeting. We started off by doing some team building activities such as a scavenger hunt followed by a chance to talk about our school experience and the 'Charming Project'. Finally, we talked about the upcoming conference and gained more information about it. I will be attending the Young Ambassadors conference on the 6th November to help Gold Ambassadors with different skills necessary when delivering sessions. If you are interested in coaching and want some advice please feel free to contact me by emailing Miss S Thomas, Sixth Form Manager at snt@penglais.org.uk

Alumni News

Former student Luke Roberts has recently won a Glee award for Product Design in the Garden Leisure and Entertainment sector. The annual Glee event is the largest garden trade show event in the UK and gives companies the opportunity to showcase their products and to speak to customers.

Luke is currently on a Knowledge Transfer Partnership Scheme (KTP) with the Welsh Government, the company Zest 4 leisure and Cardiff Metropolitan University. Zest 4 Leisure is one of the leading suppliers of soft wood timber garden products in the UK and supply garden centres around the UK with their products. The company is based in North Wales and Luke's main job role at Zest is Product Designer. As part of the KTP he is currently imbedding a structured design process suitable for the company so that they can become market leaders within the industry, bringing innovative products to market by following the design process which includes strategic market research, design for manufacture assembly and user centred designs principles imbedded within the process.

Zest for Leisure entered two products by Luke and the KTP into the competition because they believed that these products are different to those currently on the market and that they will suit the end user needs when they are launched in January 2021. Pictured are the products designed by Luke:





Ex student **Sarah Lianne Lewis** has recently been appointed Composer Affiliate for the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. This is really exciting news; she will be composing on an international level, for the national orchestra of our country.

Ex student **Tom Mathias** recently graduated with a Masters distinction from the **Royal Academy of Music**, where he was awarded the prestigious ABRSM scholarship along with a DipRAM for outstanding performance. Prior to lockdown, he also played in a series of concerts with **Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra**.

Ex-student **Dylan Cairnes-Howarth** recently graduated from the **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**, having studied traditional music there for the last five years.

You can hear both **Dylan** and **Tom** performing as part of our 'Last Night of the Penglais Proms' concert (available on Youtube and Facebook – search for 'Cerddoriaeth Penglais Music'). You can also hear **Sarah's** music played on BBC Radio 3!

Modern Foreign Languages

MFL Mentoring Project 2020/2021

As part of the Welsh Government's Global Futures strategy to promote modern languages, Penglais will again be taking part in an exciting initiative, the Modern Foreign Language Student Mentoring Project.

Students in Year 8 and 9 have been offered the opportunity to be mentored by a student studying at Aberystwyth University. The aims of the scheme are to raise students' educational aspirations, improve their motivation and broaden their horizons in terms of career opportunities.

Our university student will mentor students in a group, taking place online using Microsoft Teams. She will deliver fun and engaging sessions which focus on several themes not typically explored in the classrooms.

The mentor will create bespoke multilingual resources for their group, allowing students to explore whichever languages and cultures interest them.

(This scheme is fully funded by the Welsh Government and is pioneering in its partnership working between schools, universities and the wider sector. It also follows the principles of the Curriculum for Wales 2022 which includes Modern Foreign Languages, Welsh and English within the same Area of Learning and Experience.)

Science

Cardiff University Life Sciences Challenge

Massive congratulations to Year 11 students Caleb, Austin, Matthew and Sohaib who beat Dyffryn Amman by 17 points to get through to the Semi Final round of the Cardiff University Life Sciences Challenge, competing against schools from across Wales. The judges were very impressed with their scientific knowledge. Well done boys, we are very proud of you!

Engineering

Some of our students in the Year 10 Engineering class have currently been using sheet aluminium to make a tool box with engineering drawings. They apply numeracy skills in translating the drawings into their final product and use tools with precision and accuracy. They used COSHH sheets to risk assess the use of car body filler and we had some damaged wings donated to us by a local Body Shop garage. The students will be applying this to their finished products when they spray paint them.











Penglais Library

Reserve and Read Service

We are thrilled that the Library is now offering a new "Reserve & Read" service available through the Reading Cloud. www.readingcloud.net

This means that all students and staff are able to access the Library database online and reserve any books which they wish to read.

Students are able to see the new resource additions to the Library, news, blog posts, book reviews, author details, recommendations, Top 10 lists and most importantly search and reserve any book or item from our Library.

These books are then delivered directly to the students and safely quarantined on their return.

We are delighted that our students will still be able to access the great books and resources which our Library offers.



National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust has paired with The Royal British Legion to provide resources to support the learning of Remembrance.

https://literacytrust.org.uk/news/we-launch-new-resources-help-pupils-learn-importance-remembrance-royal-british-legion/





Literary Events

The Library has also been celebrating certain literary events such as Roald Dahl's birthday, Black History Month and National Poetry Day.



Creative Writing Club

The Library and English department have set up a virtual Creative Writing Club on Teams. This is open to all students to join and features internal and external competitions, tips and skills for writing, activities, recommendations and more.

Join on Teams with code we23bb2





Côr Penglais

In March 2020, our school choir (Côr Penglais) travelled to Cardiff for a two day visit. They sang in a special lunchtime concert in the Senedd in Cardiff Bay on St Davids Day, where they sung to an audience of Senedd members and tourists. The students also attended a special concert by the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales at St Davids Hall (with front row seats), as well as enjoying a tour of the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. We also enjoyed a pizza in Cardiff Bay, as well as the hospitality of the Urdd. We were glad (and very lucky) to be able to enjoy this trip before lockdown began!

The situation changed rapidly over the next two weeks, causing a rethink. We had many exciting things planned for the côr for the remainder of 2020, which obviously couldn't go ahead. This involved preparing for three competitive appearances. The first of these was **Music For Youth Regional Festival** in Bridgend on April 1st, for where we were due to take 5 ensembles down to South Wales to compete (including the côr). We had hoped to be able to get through this regional round, to be able to take ensembles to the final in the Royal Albert Hall in July. Following it's postponement, we will be entering an online version of the competition in 2021.

Côr Penglais also managed to get as far as the final of the **Wales Youth Choir Competition** run by Côr Meibion Pontarddulais, which was due to be held in late April. This would have meant a trip to sing at the Great Hall in Swansea; we were one of only eight youth choirs in Wales to be selected (and one of only three from a school, rather than one run by an outside agency). The prize would have been £1000. The final was obviously postponed; we will be competing when the national situation changes.

Finally (and most notably), we were also planning to take three ensembles to compete and perform at the **Llangollen International Eisteddfod** in July 2020. We had two ensembles competing (an audition-only A Capella group and a percussion ensemble), as well as Côr Penglais singing on two of the stages as entertainment. We were (as far as we know) the only Welsh school represented in these categories; a huge honour. When the International Eisteddfod returns in the future, we will return.

2020 was proving to be a hugely exciting year for the department, with the Llangollen International Eisteddfod being a highlight. We are looking forward to being able to enjoy online versions of these competitions in 2021.

Our non-auditioned open-access choir is currently student-run by Lucille (Y13) and William (Y13). It is great to promote student leadership within the department; they both put a lot of effort and time into leading the choir, and we are very grateful. If any students are interested in filling their shoes next year, do get in touch!





"Talking Shop" during lockdown

We usually run a monthly programme of visiting speakers, who visit the department to talk to GCSE and A-Level classes about their life as professional musicians. Obviously, lockdown put a temporary stop to this; however we managed to get a version going via video, where students were able to have their questions answered by professional musicians.

During lockdown, we managed to arrange 'Talking Shop' sessions with the following artists;

- Luke McCall (Welsh West End star, playing Valjean and Phantom on the West End).
- Owain Gruffydd Roberts (London-based composer, producer and professional musician)
- Ruth Rose (Professional freelance violinist)
- Mei Gwynedd (Welsh singer/songwriter who supported 'Oasis' at the Millennium Stadium)
- Eric Whittaker (American choral composer/conductor, who recorded his video for us from his studio in Los Angeles!).
- Alan Swain (Principal trombonist in the Welsh National Opera)
- Ollie Tumner (Percussionist in West End musical 'Stomp')
- David Lowe (Composer of the BBC News theme, also wrote the music for 'Grand Designs')
- Dame Evelyn Glennie (Internationally renowned percussionist)
- Kate Andrews (Principal Lecturer in Music & Music Therapy at the University of Warwick)
- Jess Gillam (Classical saxophonist, also BBC Radio 3 and BBC4 presenter)
- Thomas Mathias (Freelance violinist and ex-Penglais student, who has recently finished studying at the RNCM).
- Nichola Beneddetti CBE (Classical violinist, also one of the highest-paid classical musicians in the World).

We are continuing these into the Autumn term. We currently have 'Talking Shop' sessions recorded from the following;

- John Rutter (International choral composer)
- Grant Llewelyn (Welsh conductor of the North Carolina Symphony Orchestra, amongst others)
- Steff Rees (Songwriter in Welsh band 'Bwca')
- Aled Lloyd (Freelance percussionist and drummer, based in Wales)
- Phillip Harper (Conductor of the Cory Band, who are the World's leading brass band).
- James Andrews (Percussionist in the Cory Band).
- Stacey Doherty (Welsh freelance saxophonist, who has an international career).
- Rachel K Collier (Welsh electronic music producer and performer, who is big on the American music scene)
- Ian Evans (Freelance percussionist and home studio producer)
- Owain Arwel Hughes (Past conductor of BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and coordinator of the annual Welsh proms concert series).

There are also one or two more being made. As you can see, it is a very full list! In each 'Talking Shop' video, the artist answers questions from GCSE and A-Level students at Penglais. They are currently on YouTube as 'unlisted' (unsearchable) videos; if you'd like to watch one, send me an email and I will forward you the link. We are hugely grateful to the participants for answering our students questions, especially during such an unusual time.

Instrumental and Vocal Lessons

Instrumental and vocal lessons are provided by Ceredigion County Music Service, and are taught by peripatetic teachers. They are currently working from home, and are teaching lessons via webcam and Teams.

From a student perspective, this means that students still come to a practice room for their lessons (as normal); however their teacher is on a screen. Communication is via webcam and microphone. We've now ironed out lots of issues (delay, backing tracs, feedback etc) and things are running smoothly.

If you (or your child) would like to learn a new instrument, it's not too late to get involved. Lessons are £140 for the whole year, and are cheaper if you already have a sibling learning. Students who study GCSE or A-Level Music (or who are receiving free school meals) are entitled to free lessons. We can offer lessons in all brass, woodwind and string instruments, as well as piano, voice, percussion and harp. If you'd like to join in, please get in touch!

We have a particular need for some of the more unusual instruments (bassoon, viola etc).





Freshers Week concerts

A number of our A-Level students recently took part in a series of online concerts, providing the live entertainment for Aberystwyth University Freshers Week. The students performed live in a studio (in front of broadcast-quality cameras), which was relayed live on the internet to a large audience. The feed was also broadcast onto a large 9'x6' screen in the Arts Centre, in front of a large audience.

Well done to Heledd (Y12), Hugo (Y13), Emma (Y13), Indigo (Y12), Ilona (Y13) and Angelina (Y13) who performed at various times. Heledd sang a one hour long solo set on the Monday night of freshers week, followed by 'Silent Youth' (Hugo, Indigo, Angelina and Ilona). Hugo and Emma then played an hours set on the Tuesday, followed by Ilona who sang for an hour on the Wednesday. The gigs were organised by ex-Penglais student (and governor) Huw Bates, and tech-ed by ex-Penglais student Joe Wilcox.

Well done to all six students; who've now done more gigs in a week than many professional musicians have done in six months...!





Music making during lockdown

Our first online concert was on 16th March (in lieu of a Museum concert, which was cancelled due to the impending lockdown). We followed this with another online concert on Friday 3rd April, to mark the end of the Easter term.

We then ran a series of twelve weekly concert series throughout the Summer term, called the 'Penglais Proms'. Modelled on the BBC Proms in the Royal Albert Hall, the concerts featured different themes as well as showcasing different students in the school. All of the concerts are still available to watch now; search for 'Cerddoriaeth Penglais Music' on YouTube or Facebook.

A particular highlight of lockdown was having an email inbox full of music! Lots of students were recording themselves playing or singing at home, and then sending these recordings in for inclusion in the proms concerts - it was great to see such high levels of engagement from the department. The final 'Last Night of the Penglais Proms' concert also managed to include parents and assorted siblings (as accompanists, backing singers and occasional percussionists), various musical alumini of Penglais, performances from students from Year 6 of our feeder primaries, contributions from current and past staff - as well as a few appearances from pets!

A highlight was the student-led 'Beatles Christmas' concert. This started from an idea from Lucy (Y12), who asked if we could do a 'Beatles'-themed online concert. A bit of research showed that 25th June is Global Beatles Day, which seemed like a good excuse for a student-led online concert. We then realised that that date was exactly half-way to Christmas; so a new (and fairly unique) concert theme was born! This idea really took off via Teams, as the organisation, recording and editing being done by students. If you'd like to listen, it's still available on our Facebook and YouTube pages.

Future Concerts

There won't be any 'in the flesh' concerts this term, for obvious reasons. However, we are planning two online concerts for the second half of this term. Our first event will be on the evening of Wednesday November 11th, when we hope to put out an online Remembrance Day concert at 7.30pm. This will be broadcast on our YouTube channel and Facebook page (search 'Cerddoriaeth Penglais Music'). In addition, we will also be planning something Christmas-sy for the final week of term. It doesn't pay to plan too far ahead just yet (in the current climate), but we will be doing something! Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details.

If you'd like to be involved in either concert (or if you have a suggestion for anything else that we could be doing), please do get in contact.

Extra Curricular; Online Choir – "Social Distan-SING"

Our online choir (called "Social Distan-SING") has recently restarted online. Students can listen to each of the 4 parts (as recorded by Miss Blair), learn them and then record themselves singing their part. We will be mixing these together, and showing the results in online concerts later this term. We are currently planning to learn a new song each week.

If you'd like to join in, all you will need is a means of recording yourself (phone quality is fine), as well as an internet connection to access Teams. For more details (and to be added to the Team), please contact Miss Blair via email (<u>rxb@penglais.org.uk</u>).

Penglais PTA

The PTA held a zoom meeting with year 7 and 8 parents to meet new parents and explain the benefits of the PTA.

Some of the benefits include:

- meeting new parents
- Meeting teachers
- Raising money for school projects
- having fun

There are still spaces available for any parents that would like to join the PTA, please contact the chair, Heather Cox at heather@coxesjhhj.co.uk for more information on how to join.

The PTA AGM will be taking place on Thursday 22nd October. Notes from this meeting will be in the next newsletter.

The School Lottery

The School Lottery raised approximately £1500 over the last year. Joining is easy, visit https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/ lottery/school/penglais-school? fbclid=IwAR2vRn8npaMnEQhjdHmknyBFLe nLcqlcf8sGkmsa0GYarslAuyEuxtp0hTo where there are more details on how to sign up. It can be done for £1 per week as a direct debit and stopped at any time.





NOTICES TO PARENTS



We are pleased to announce that we will shortly be introducing an online payment system for items such as dinner money and school trips. Using a secure website called ParentPay you will be able to pay online using your credit/debit card or make cash payments at PayPoint stores. ParentPay will be our only method of making payments to school. If you have any queries relating to this new payment system please contact us 01970 624811 or admin@penglais.org.uk.

More information regarding setting up ParentPay will be sent out shortly via Parentmail.

We need your help! If you shop online, please could you sign up to easyfundraising to support Penglais School?

It's a really easy way to raise money for us you just use the easyfundraising site to shop online with more than 3,300 well-known online stores like Amazon, Argos, John Lewis, ASOS, Booking.com, eBay, Boden, and M&S. When you make a purchase, the retailer sends us a free donation, at no extra cost to you.

So far we've nearly raised £170. We want to continue to raise as much as possible for the school, so please visit our new easyfundraising

page at

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ penglaisschool/

and click 'support us'. Thank you!

Penglais School's Class Charts is now available for parents to access. This provides you with up to date information to track your child's progress in school as well as displaying all homework that is set. It is a valuable tool for all parents/guardians. Follow the link to the Class Charts homepage to log int https://www.classcharts.com We've also included a quick guide to class charts for parents which will be up on the school

The school is operating a no mobile phone policy. All students are aware that the school is operating a no phone policy therefore we would like to remind parents of this. Should a student need to make a call within school hours, they should speak to Student Services.



Raise funds for PENGLAS SCHO

every time you

Find us on easy fundraising to start:

https://www/easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/penglaisschool





Shop with over 3,300 online stores

John Lewis M&S









Booking.com Bo





DEBENHAMS









