



31st August 2021 – Headteacher Blog #17 – Back to School Preparations

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students/ Annwyl Rieni, Gwarchodwyr a Myfyrwyr

I hope you have had a very restful and rejuvenating summer break and that the under 18's reading this are now ready to embrace a new year of academic study and individual development.

After celebrating an exceptional set of final outcomes from years 13 and 11 this summer, we are looking forward to seeing each and every student next week.

Back to school arrangements:

Friday 3rd and Monday 6th are designated INSET days, where all staff will be preparing for the upcoming academic year, whilst carrying out compulsory training. Years 7, 12 and 13 will return to school on Tuesday 7th September, where Lessons 1 & 2 will be spent with form tutors carrying out induction and also receiving a special 'Welcome' assembly from myself. All other year groups will then return to school on Wednesday 8th September and receive similar 'Welcome back' procedures.

We are really looking forward to meeting our incoming Year 7's on Tuesday. They need to arrive at school by 8.20am at the latest. Staff will be on the school gates to greet them and give them directions for the day.

On Wednesday 8th, all returning students need to arrive at school no later than 8:20am, so they can be at their form rooms for an 8.30am start. During this time they will receive their timetable and student planner. Each year group will also have an assembly to welcome them back to school and to clearly outline our expectations for positive and genuine mutual respectful behaviour for learning, excellent punctuality and attendance, immaculate uniform and good organisation. These will form the foundation and minimum expectation for all members of our school community in the year ahead. In particular, we will be reiterating our 4 main expectations:

- Be ready,
- Be respectful,
- Be safe, and
- Be Successful!

CoVid-19 Risk Assessment:

Despite the move to Level Zero in Wales, and even though most restrictions have been lifted, we in school are still governed by the guidance directed to us by Welsh Government. Therefore, at the time of writing this, I can confirm the following rules still apply at Pencoedtre High School:

1. Masks must be worn whilst travelling around corridors, whilst queuing for food and on school buses.
2. Masks **do not** have to be worn in lessons.



3. One way systems remain in place around the corridors.
4. Face coverings for all visitors to school.
5. Increased Lateral Flow testing (this to be clarified on receipt of additional guidance).

There has been a significant increase in cases both locally and nationally, so please remember that should your child feel unwell and experience symptoms of CoVid 19, it is vital they do not attend school, self-isolate and arrange a PCR test as soon as possible.

We will also be maintaining designated year group areas at break and lunch, due to the increased and extensive building work being carried out at school. Students **WILL NOT** be allowed to wander around the grounds during these times!

Uniform:

We made a conscious decision as a school, to be flexible with regards to uniform on the return to school after the 2nd lockdown in April. On return to school in September this will not be the case! Our standards in uniform set the level of expectations that we have for all our students. We will not make any exceptions for this from September. For those families who are entitled to free school meals, please see the link below regarding support for uniform:

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/schools/Pupil-Development-Grant.aspx>

For further details regarding uniform, please see the following link:

<https://www.pencoedtrehigh.org.uk/our-school/uniform/>

Equipment:

All students need to return to school with at least basic equipment that ensures they are ready to learn. We would consider basic equipment to be; Pen, Pencil, Ruler, Rubber and Calculator (especially for GCSE students). We expect this basic equipment to be stored in a pencil case and placed in their school bag.

Towards the end of last term, there were an increasing number of students who were attending school without a school bag. This must not be the case going forward, as we will be asking pupils to take books home and also all mobile phones, as per our new procedures, must be placed in their bag. We will not accept mobile phones in pockets or coats. We as a school will provide any specialist equipment needed.

Mobile phones:

A reminder, mobile phones should not be seen or heard within the school gates. Quite simply, if we see or hear them, we confiscate them. They should be switched off and secured in school bags. Sixth formers are permitted to use them responsibly in their common room and self-study areas. Please see the following link regarding the use of mobile phones from September:

<https://www.loom.com/share/b1de410a82c24bf1ba16ddfb4e3aa97a>



Jewellery:

Students are permitted to wear a watch and one pair of studs in their ears. Other piercings are not deemed acceptable for school. Bracelets, rings and necklaces must not be worn.

Nails, hair, make-up:

We ask that your child ensure that any false nails are natural in length and that the colour too is natural.

We have also seen a rise in the number of students dying their hair bright colours (green/ blue /purple). This should also be rinsed out before returning to school. We are aware that hair/nails have no correlation to educational attainment; however we strive to ensure consistency in the standards upheld at Pencoedtre High School.

Furthermore, we have seen an increase in the amount of make-up and false eyelashes worn. We fully support the importance of having self-confidence, but we do ask that make-up is subtle where possible.

We realise that this may seem pedantic or insignificant in the grand scheme of things, but as a school we work from grass roots, taking pride in the school uniform as a first step to ensuring excellent behaviour and genuine mutual respect for all members of our PHS family.

The pride we have in our pupils is hard to place into words. Over the last 18 months, they have shown a resilience and determination that is admirable in students so young and so we hope that you can help support us in our focus on standards this term.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Thank you for reading/Diolch am ddarllen and have a lovely last couple of weeks this summer!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Lee G Humphreys', written in a cursive style.

Lee G Humphreys,
Headteacher

Coming soon, to a community near you!

