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YSGOL GYMUNEDOL
CWMTAWE
COMMUNITY SCHOOL

PARENTS' NEWSLETTER

Summer 2021

CYLCHLYTHYR RHINI

Haf 2021

Dear Parents,

We are delighted to bring you our summer newsletter, outlining a selection of school news from this academic year.

It is fair to say it has been a year like no other. However, we have a lot to be thankful for and we have strived to involve our pupils, parents and the community in as many activities as we could safely undertake.

Each small step takes us closer to a sense of normality and we are really hopeful that our pupils can get involved in even more from September.

I wish you all a relaxing summer break and would like to extend my sincere thanks to all our pupils, parents/carers, our staff and our supporters throughout the local community.

Yours sincerely

Mr. C.L. Hitchings

HEADTEACHER / PRIFATHRO

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS – YOU CAN STILL APPLY TO CWMTAWE! / MYNEDIAD I GWMTAWE – DYDY HI DDIM YN RHY HWYR I WNEUD CAIS!

Cwmtawe Community School continues to be a very popular destination for pupils from local primary schools.

We are over-subscribed for admissions in September 2021 but we will make every effort to accommodate any new applicants.

If you are interested in applying to Cwmtawe – or have friends, brothers or sisters who wish to apply please contact the school as soon as possible at **cwmtaweschool@hwbcymru.net** or **01792 863200**.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY DYDDIADAU AR GYFER Y DYDDIADUR

5 July	Eco Focus Week
13 July	Year 7 Sports Day
14 July	Year 8 Sports Day

15 July	Year 9 Sports Day
2 September	Insert Day
3 September	First Day for Pupils

ONLINE LEARNING / DYSGU AR-LEIN

The past year has been challenging for everyone as we had to rapidly change our ways of working to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and the community throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although our buildings were closed for periods during the various Covid lockdowns, Cwmtawe School was still very much open for teaching and learning.

Learning quickly transferred online, with teachers working diligently from home to prepare and deliver lessons.

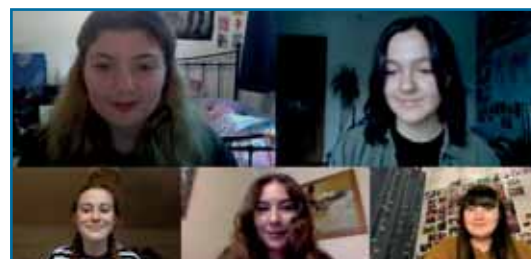
It is remarkable how staff and pupils adjusted to the new online technology. By using the all-Wales Hwb network, high quality teaching resources were designed at Cwmtawe for pupils to participate in lessons and complete work at home.

The next phase involved the introduction of virtual face-to-face teaching and it was good for pupils to feel part of their classes again.

A number of pupils also attended our local hub provision to enable essential worker parents to maintain vital services throughout the pandemic.

Apart from the actual lessons and coursework, the school kept in close contact with children and parents to offer support and ensure their well-being. Normal activities and events had to be cancelled or postponed throughout the year, and our young people missed seeing their friends. Keeping in touch was especially important.

Thank you to all pupils, parents and staff for your support and co-operation during this very difficult year.



CROESO – WELCOME BACK!

There were smiles all round on 15 March when the first pupils returned to the school campus after lockdown.

The easing of restrictions allowed Year 11 and Year 10 to return first, with all classes returning by 22 March

Although the excellent and innovative online education had continued, the children gained so much more from seeing their friends and teachers again.

Covid secure measures were introduced to ensure social distancing and effective hygiene to keep everyone safe and well.

ONLINE PARENTS' EVENINGS / NOSWEITHIAU RHIENI AR-LEIN

It wasn't only the pupils that got used to new ways of using technology during lockdown – but parents too!

There has been an excellent response to the online parents' evenings when individual times could be booked to discuss progress, feedback, and future subject options.

GCSE ASSESSMENTS REFLECT PUPILS' HARD WORK / ASESIADAU TGAU YN ADLEWYRCHU DYCYNWCH Y DISGYBLION

Last Summer the Welsh Government decided that GCSE examinations could not proceed due to the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Pupils had already worked hard towards the Summer exams and it was important that their achievements were recognised.

The examinations were replaced by 'Centre Determined Grades' and our pupils had achieved some excellent provisional outcomes, which will be a solid basis for the next phase of their lives in college or the workplace.

Arrangements are already in hand for the summer 2021 assessments, which will follow Welsh Government guidance.

FOOD BANK DONATIONS HELP THE COMMUNITY / HELPU'R BANCIAU BWYD LLEOL

The last 18 months has seen some remarkable acts of kindness in our communities, not least by our pupils who collected a tremendous number of donations for our local foodbanks at Pontardawe and Ystalyfera.

The items were gratefully received by the foodbank volunteers, who have supported increasing numbers of local families and individuals throughout the pandemic.



HELP THE PTA TO HELP OUR SCHOOL! / HELPWCH Y GYMDEITHAS RIENI AC ATHRAWON I GEFNOGI'R YSGOL!

Would you like to help Cwmtawe School's Parent Teachers Association?

This lively group helps raise funds and support the school, enabling us to buy minibuses, technology equipment (laser cutter), gym equipment as well as a triple jump sandpit.

They have met online recently and are already planning future enjoyable events. If you would like to join the PTA you would be made very welcome.

Due to the lack of opportunities to raise funds during the pandemic the PTA are helping to organise events for the end of term to continue to help and support all our pupils.

GWISG YSGOL / SCHOOL UNIFORM

If you have school uniform – black trousers, a school jumper or t-shirt – that's in a good condition but is too small for your child we would be very grateful to you for sending the clothes to school. We can ensure that other pupils can make the best use of the clothes. Diolch yn fawr / Thank you very much.

INTERNET SAFETY / DIOGELWCH AR Y RHYNGRWDYD

During lockdown, pupils increased their usage of the internet and we felt that delivering internet safety lessons and assemblies were of the utmost importance when they returned to school. There have been some lively discussions during Key Stage 3 tutor lessons. If you have any concerns or feel that you would like more information about how to keep your child safe online or when using social media, please visit www.net-aware.org.uk

YEAR 11'S LAST DAY / DIWRNOD OLAF BLWYDDYN 11

After a challenging year for our pupils and staff, it was not possible to hold many end-of-term activities. However our year 11 students still had a day to remember on their last day in school on Thursday 27th May.

They celebrated their five years at Cwmtawe with a celebratory breakfast together while a memorable assembly was delivered by their Head of Year, recounting the memories created over the last five years. By lesson 5 their hard work was over and they could relax and socialise in the sunshine on the school yard with hotdogs and drinks provided by the PTA. It was a chance to chat and take photos with each other and the teachers – and the traditional signing of shirts!

We will always be proud of our year 11 pupils as they go on to college or other careers and we wish them all well for the future.



Physical Education / Addysg Gorfforol

RACE TO THE STADIUMS / RAS I'R STADIWM

Well done to everyone who participated in *Race to the Stadiums* in the two weeks before February half-term! It was a fantastic challenge that staff enjoyed taking part in as well! As you can see, the winning team in the Year 7, Year 8 and staff competition was Cwmtawe - well done!! It didn't matter if you just took the dog out for a walk, or cycled 50kms, it was an all-round team effort and everybody who uploaded their distances contributed to some slim winning margins! As a school, we travelled the equivalent distance of getting around all the stadiums hosting games in this year's Six Nations Rugby Championship! More importantly, we all got off the sofa, away from our screens, and did something special to improve both our physical and mental well-being. The challenge now is to keep being active and feeling good, and what better way of doing this than to look at this week's PE & Games lesson activities and giving the fitness sessions a go, let's do this!



CYCLING CHALLENGE / HER SEICLO

Ben Cleave in 7T and his younger brother in primary completed a strenuous cycling challenge last year to raise money for their little cousin who's got a brain tumour. When they heard their seven year old cousin, Jessica, was starting her second battle against an aggressive brain tumour, they decided to raise money to help.

The boys spent the Christmas holidays cycling the 8,840m of altitude to reach the summit of Mount Everest – on static, indoor bike trainers!

In two weeks, the boys rode more than 500m per day of altitude gain, in order to reach their target. To achieve this, they cycled more than 300km in distance (mostly uphill) using the popular on-line cycling platform 'Zwift'.

Ben and Joshua raised enough money to fund one day research into brain tumours, which currently costs £2,740.00. The school is immensely proud of their achievements.



LOLA THAIR

Following a rigorous selection process, Year 9 pupil Lola Thair has been elected to the Youth Panel Sports Wales. This public body makes decisions on all aspects of sports in the community, such as funding, mental health, forming new clubs and sporting events.



CRICKET / CRICED

Congratulations to Joseph Hall in 7S on being chosen as captain of the Wales Under 12's cricket team.



DYDD GWYL DEWI / ST. DAVID'S DAY

The PE Department called on everyone to make the most of the sunny weather back in March by getting outside and active as part of the school's Eisteddfod and St. David's Day celebrations.

This St. David's Day, we signed up to take part in Run Wales' national #FromMyDoor virtual run. The campaign aimed to get Wales moving and to discover what's beyond our front doors.

We encouraged staff and students alike to take at least 30 minutes out of their day, leave their front doors behind, get moving and share their pictures of this amazing place we call home to celebrate St. David's Day. Special assemblies were held and Year 7 pupils made an extra effort with their costumes.

Thank you for your support, we loved seeing all your photos!

A vertical illustration of three daffodils. Each flower has six bright yellow petals and a prominent, multi-layered orange-red center. They are attached to a single, slender green stem that curves slightly. The background is plain white.

The Welsh Department set a fun challenge to all our pupils. They were asked to send in ideas that reflected Wales in different ways, and they responded with great flair and imagination.

The Welsh department staff were extremely impressed with the hard work behind the entries, and pupils said they had enjoyed working on their ideas.

It was also great to see so many of our pupils on screen wearing their Welsh colours!

Here is a selection of the entries.



A collage of various Welsh symbols and emblems. At the top left is a red dragon rampant. Below it is a harp. To the right is a black and white sheep. Further right is a silver trews (Welsh national emblem). At the top right is a yellow St. Andrew's Cross on a black background. Below the harp is a leek. In the center is the text 'WELSH EMBLEMS' in red. To the right of the text is a yellow daffodil. Below the leek is a pair of children in traditional Welsh dress. At the bottom right is a red dragon passant on a green background.



YOUTH COUNCIL OF NEATH PORT TALBOT / CYNGOR IEUENCTID CASTELL-NEDD PORT TALBOT

Year 11 pupils Bethan Nicholas-Thomas and Isabel Williams and Year 9 pupils Flynn McGinley and Lola Thair have been representing the school on the youth council of Neath Port Talbot. The council raises awareness of issues affecting young people and the pupils have been involved in online workshops and training on issues such as gambling awareness and mental health.

The Cwmtawe team of Bethan, Isabel, Lola and Flynn represented Neath Port Talbot in the mock election which was held digitally. The team was asked to create a political party which they named "Cymru Cydraddol" (Equality Wales) and form policies. Over 100 people voted online and the winning team was no less than "Cymru Cydraddol". Llongyfarchiadau.

JOEL COTTRELL

Congratulations to Joel Cottrell on representing Wales in the Under 18s football team. We wish Joel well on signing as a professional player with Swansea City. He's certainly a name to watch in the future.



TALENTED GUITARIST / GITARYDD TALENTOG

Zac Davies from Year 11 is an exceptional guitarist and the school has enjoyed hearing him and William Newman blasting blues riffs out through the music department over the last five years!

During the first lockdown, Zac spent a lot of his time writing and producing music - eventually releasing his first song!

It was premiered on the Adam Walton show on BBC Sounds before being released onto Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube last February.

You can hear the Adam Walton show using the link below

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000r3x7>

Zac is playing guitar and singing, William Newman is on drums and Oliver Poole also forms part of the band - a Cwmtawe wonder band! Remember their name "Zac and the Newmen".



TENNIS STAR / SEREN Y BYD TENIS

Oliver Page in Year 8 has been selected as part of the Great Britain boys under 13s squad- only 5 other boys his age from across the U.K. have been selected. This involves being given elite athlete status, representing Great Britain in European tournaments and national camps.

He is currently ranked number 2 in Great Britain for under 13, and number 1 in Wales.

Oliver came second in a national under 13 event in Corby and because of his performance he earned a wild card into the main draw in an Under 14 Tennis Europe event.

Last February (just before Covid hit) he reached the last 16 in the Under 12 European championships in Auray, France.



RIVERSIDE PROJECT

A group of creative and resourceful year 9 pupils have achieved a Level 2 Award in Work Related Education at the Riverside Centre in Pontardawe. The group were tasked with a challenging mission of designing and constructing a round house using natural resources and materials available to them from the surrounding environment. Throughout the course they were able to develop a range of skills whilst learning to use various tools including handsaws, bowsaws, hammers and drills. They thoroughly enjoyed themselves planning, designing and creating the final structure and had lots of fun learning campcraft skills of lighting fires, wood carving and building shelters.

The hope is that the round house will be used as an outdoor classroom, so that other school groups can learn about and appreciate the local natural environment. As part of the qualification the group also achieved their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award with the final expedition taking them to new heights whilst conquering South Wales' highest mountain, Pen Y Fan. Cwmtawe Cynydd Youth Worker, Mr Clapham said "The pupils were absolutely superb. Their commitment and dedication to the project has been second to none. I am very proud of group for everything they have achieved."

They can now go on to achieve further qualifications and also step up to the next level of the Silver Duke of Edinburgh's award which will be a formidable experience and a real accolade to achieve. They deserve praise for what they have already accomplished and the very best wishes for success in their further aspirations next year.



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