



"Success is built on teamwork" - "Lwyddiant yn ei adelladu ar waith tîm"

The Highway
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Yr Highway
Penarlâg
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January 2017

Dear Parent/ Carer

Re : Parent Survey

Many thanks to all those parents and carers who completed the recent parent survey. It is pleasing to note the many positive comments received and the continued recognition of the work that the school does in supporting your child(ren). We are privileged to have so many supportive parents that help foster a conducive and beneficial partnership – thank you! We are not complacent, however, and are committed to sustaining a trend of continuous improvement in all that we do.

There were a number of common themes identified from the qualitative comments which we would like to respond to. We thought this would be useful so that parents are aware of the planned developments within these areas and of the constraints that sometimes we face in addressing issues.

Improved communication

We were pleased to note that nearly all parents believed communication has improved. We recently relaunched our website which now contains an array of documents that you may find helpful. This is to be further improved in due course, with an addition of a 'Best of Hawarden Tweets' section. This will draw upon some of the varied school twitter accounts which show our children at work and pictures and photographs of school life. We are sure you will find this informative and entertaining!

We are also increasing our use of email and text. All whole school letters and newsletters will now be distributed via email and paper copies will stop soon. We will also keep you updated with important events as they happen. Please do make sure that you have provided us with your latest email and mobile phone number for this purpose.

The increased use of the 'Hawarden Portal' which shows student's attendance and attitude to learning scores, on a lesson-by-lesson basis, is pleasing. However, some parents still are not benefiting from this service which will also soon incorporate other features, such as reports and assessment data. Look out for a separate email to follow with details of how to get the most out of this platform.

Supply teachers

Naturally students prefer their normal class teacher. However, there are circumstances where teacher absence is unavoidable. Last academic year teacher sickness absence was 4%, which is below the national average and below the annual student absence for the school. Whenever a teacher is absent from school the department has a responsibility to set appropriate activities in line with the scheme of work. As a school we make every effort to ensure that supply teachers who are employed on a fixed term basis are subject specialists and have the skills necessary to discharge their duties effectively.

It should also be noted that teacher absence for reasons other than sickness is inevitable. Such examples include: attendance at examination meetings and training, school trips, undertaking annual review days and other similar activities. It is worth emphasising, however, that the school has reduced the number of days lost due to such activities year-on-year for the last three years.

School Canteen

We have generally been pleased with the positive comments received about the school canteen of late, including from the school council. The range and quality of food offered has been further improved this academic year. The school canteen is governed by the Welsh Government's 'Appetite for Life' food standards which ensures that all food conforms to a balanced and nutritious menu. This is accessible from the school website (under the student's drop down menu) or on the Flintshire website (<https://goo.gl/WBoVCM>). On this page you can see the weekly menu, price lists and the regulations we are governed by.

Many parents have expressed the desire to be able to pay for school meals via an online portal. We are pleased to inform you that this functionality will soon become available and we will write to you with further details in due course. Unfortunately, owing to the point of sale system used by all Flintshire schools, it is not currently possible for you to view the food purchased by your child via an online facility. However, if you would like to receive a regular print out of this we are able to furnish you with a copy. Please contact the school to arrange this.

School facilities

Some parents have again requested that the school invest in lockers for the entire school population. We have looked at this on a few occasions over the last few years and unfortunately, aside from the investment required to do this, feasibility studies have indicated that the school has insufficient space to be able to house lockers safely. We acknowledge that carrying coats throughout the school day is inconvenient, so we would re-state our advice that investing in lightweight jackets which can be stored in bags would be prudent. Similarly, we also remind parents/carers to label all items of clothing with permanent pen to facilitate our lost property system.

Some parents commented on the recent and unfortunate closure of the All-Terrain Pitch owing to health and safety concerns. This has been a difficult decision to take, not least due to its impact upon the community who use it regularly. However, use of the facility is not currently possible owing to the surface having perished. Normally, the life span of such a facility is 7-10 years. We have enjoyed use of the facility for 19 years now, thanks to the careful husbandry and maintenance over that time. This has required a planned and continued investment from the school which has been achieved through the rental of the facility to the community. This income has also allowed the school to build up some funds to help towards its replacement. However, recent quotations of c.£200,000 demonstrates a need for us to look into alternative income streams. We very much hope to expedite this process and look forward to re-opening the pitch as early as we possibly can.

The school has recently undertaken a programme of refurbishment of its toilets. A recent suitability survey has indicated that we have sufficient numbers for the students on roll and we are pleased with the comments received from the students in relation to these upgrades.

Keeping you informed about your child's progress

We are conscious that parents wish to be updated with their child's on-going progress so that they can assist in their education. Given the number of students that we deal with, this can sometimes be difficult. The school has developed a number of mechanisms of doing this, however, which is summarised for each year group below:

Year 7	Information Evening (October), Review Day (November), Progress Report (November), Annual Major Report (May), Parents' Evening (May), SCOL Report, LNF Report, WNT Test Results (July).
Year 8	Progress Report (October), Parents' Evening (March), Annual Major Report (June), SCOL Report (June), LNF Report, WNT Test Results (July).
Year 9	Progress Report (December), Parents' Evening (January), Annual Major Report (April), NC Level Report, LNF Report, WNT Test Results (July).
Year 10	Review Day (November), Progress Report (October), Annual Major Report (June), Parents' Evening (February)
Year 11	Invitational Head of House Review Day (November), Progress Report (November), Parents' Evening (February), Annual Major Report (February).
Year 12	Information Evening (June), Review Day (March), Progress Report (November), Parents' Evening (December), Annual Major Report (March).
Year 13	Progress Report (November), Parents' Evening (February), Annual Major Report (December).

In addition to these milestones in your child's progress, you can access real-time information relating to your child's attitude to learning for each lesson via the 'Hawarden Portal' extension to the school website. This gives you an indication of whether your child is meeting the expected standard in each lesson every day.

Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Head of House at any time. They will be happy to meet with you as necessary, or obtain an update from your child's teachers of progress.

Contacting the school

Please do contact the school office for information at any time. Whilst we cannot normally accommodate unannounced visits to the school, we will be more than happy to arrange meetings with staff at mutually convenient times. In addition to contacting the school via telephone, you can email the school office with questions or queries which will be re-directed to the relevant member of staff.

Your child's form tutor or Head of House would be your normal point of contact. Meetings with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher can be arranged via Mrs. L. Donnelly should they be necessary.

If you are not satisfied with how an issue has been dealt with and you wish to complain, please see the Complaints Policy on the school website (accessible from the Parents drop down menu).

School uniform

Our school uniform is important to us. We believe that we have high standards but sometimes students push the boundaries and we rely on parents to re-state and support our expectations. Your help in ensuring that boys wear appropriate trousers for school, girls wear appropriate skirts/trousers and both genders wear formal shoes is appreciated. This is especially important at the start of a new term. A section on the school website dedicated to uniform provides a visual reference in addition to our uniform rules.

There are currently no plans to introduce a blazer owing to insufficient appetite for such changes in previous attitudinal surveys conducted.

We hope that you find the information provided in this communication useful.

Yours sincerely



Mr. S. Budgen

Deputy Headteacher