



22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021

Dear parents/ carers,

As this first half-term of the new academic year draws to a close, I want to express my thanks on behalf of the school community for all your support. Although Covid -19 and other more common illnesses continues to affect attendance, it has been wonderful to return to a more normal rhythm of school life. I pay tribute to the professionalism of our staff, and the kindness and positivity of our pupils.

A particular well done to our Year 7; coming up to a new school can be a little daunting but they have settled in really well and have been a pleasure to teach.

### Changes to lunchtime arrangements

In order to maximise teaching time, and allow more pupils to experience a traditional lunchtime setting, we are going to slightly restructure period 4 so all pupils have the opportunity to eat lunch in the dining halls. The structure of the day is below and this will start from the first day back after half-term (November 1<sup>st</sup> 2021) :

Time	Activity	Year Group
8.30 -8.50	Assembly/ registration	All year groups
8.50-9.50	Lesson 1	All year groups
9.50-10.50	Lesson 2	All year groups
10.50 -11.05	Morning break	All year groups
11.05- 12.05	Lesson 3	All year groups
12.05 -12.40	Lunch A	Year 7 and 8
12.40 – 1.40	Lesson 4	Year 7 and 8
12.05 -1.05	Lesson 4	Year 9, 10, 11
1.05 – 1.40	Lunch B	Year 9, 10, 11
1.40 -2.40	Lesson 5	All year groups





The easy way of thinking about this is that it is a **split lunch** system:

- When Years 7/ 8 are on lunch, Year 9/10/11 are in lesson 4.
- When Year 9/10/11 are on lunch, Years 7/ 8 are in lesson 4.

The main hall will serve hot food and the lesser hall will serve 'grab and go' food.

### Ordering Food

All menus are posted on the school website, we have posters around the school and we will be having handouts for the pupils. The student price list will show the list of foods they can pre-order. This is grab and go food only, hot food will just be chosen when the pupils are at the canteen counter.

- Pupils in years 9/10/ 11 can pre-order at breaktime.
- Pupils in year 7/ 8 can pre-order between 8.00 and 8.30 in the lesser hall.

They will be issued with a receipt which they **must not lose**. Payment is taken from Parent Pay.

Please read these arrangements through with your son/daughter. We will go through these arrangements again with pupils on the first day back to make sure they know what to do. We will review the arrangements at the end of the next half-term.

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### Attendance and Punctuality

Please help your child to do their very best by ensuring they arrive on time every day, and are in school every day.

We expect all pupils to be in school by 8.20 a.m. in order to be in registration for 8.30 a.m. We do have a breakfast club where pupils can have toast and refreshments. If your child arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer. Below is a graph showing how being late to school every day over a school year adds up to lost learning time.



Regular school attendance is an important part of giving your child the best possible start in life. Pupils who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. Good attendance shows potential employers that your child is reliable. Research suggests that students who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime. Below is a table showing how your child's percentage attendance equates to the amount of school time missed.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	2 Weeks	54 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	4 Weeks	114 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	6 Weeks	174 Lessons
80%	38 Days	72 Sessions	8 Weeks	228 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	10 Weeks	288 Lessons
70%	57 Days	114 Sessions	11.5 Weeks	342 Lessons
65%	67 Days	134 Sessions	13.5 Weeks	402 Lessons

### Jesus College, University of Oxford



Senior School Parliament pupils were given the opportunity to visit Oxford University this week as part of our widening access work with our university partner.

Pen y Dre High School has very strong and established links with Oxford University, and photos of our former pupils who have studied at Oxford in disciplines such as music, engineering and jurisprudence (law) are on display in the school foyer.



A particular aspect of this visit was to experience general university life and to attend a philosophy lecture. Our pupils learnt that at Oxford they don't want to "know it alls" but "think it alls".

That's a very fascinating philosophical point and our pupils found the visit inspirational.

### Poppy Run 2021

On the final day of half-term Year 11 helped organise a very successful Poppy Run for the whole school. To date the event has raised over £2380.00 for the Royal British Legion. Diolch yn fawr Mr M. Morgan and da iawn bawb/ well done everyone!





Ysgol Uwchradd  
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Headteacher: Keith Maher MA NPQH  
Deputy Headteacher: Vikki Prosser BSc Hons NPQH

## Admissions for Year 6 September 2022

Next half-term we will be running an Open Evening for our Year 6 pupils and parents. We will finalise over the next few weeks what this will entail; it is likely to be a virtual event in the first instance.

Over the last two years we have had more applications to our Year 7 than places, so if you have children in year 6 or know of friends who have, our advice is to apply now.

The deadline closes on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and the link is below (please cut and paste into your browser).

<https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/resident/schools-and-learning/school-admissions/apply-for-a-school-place/secondary-school-admissions/>

## Other news

- Pen y Dre High School was the most successful secondary school in the 2021 Eisteddfod y Rhondda with 14 pupils achieving 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> place in various competitions.
- Pen y Dre High School was the most successful English medium secondary school in the 2021 national Eisteddfod yr Urdd with top 3 placings in the literacy and oracy competitions.
- A huge well done to our fantastic Year 7 pupil Kierah Morgan-Moloney who ran as a candidate for Deputy Youth Mayor. An amazing achievement for Kierah as the youngest candidate.

And finally, please note that Year 11 will have mock examinations on the week beginning 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021. Our Year 11 after school revision programme is well under way and attendance on this weekly programme will be very beneficial to your child's progress towards their final GCSE exams.

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As always, we are here to support you with any concerns or issues that may arise. Please do let us know if you require any further help through the usual email channels to staff. You can also follow the successes of Pen y Dre High School pupils on Twitter @1Penydre.

Have a happy, safe and restful half-term.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. K. Maher Headteacher



PEN Y DRE  
HIGH SCHOOL

