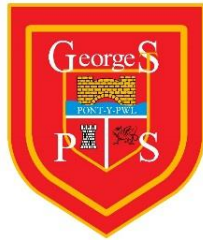


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YSGOL GYNRADD A MEITHRIN STRYD SIORS GEORGE STREET PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

Wainfelin Road, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 6BX

Thursday 03 December 2020

Dear parent/carers

December has arrived and we have ushered the festive season in this week with Elf Day. Children have been busy making cards and seasonal treats, enjoying hot chocolate and marshmallows and turning the school into a regular Santa's Workshop. They have also recorded songs that will be posted online once they are stitched together. Lots to do!

Despite all this busy activity, you will probably have heard rumours over recent days about the possible early closure of schools. From our point of view this is rumour only. We have planned for school to be open in normal face-to-face operation until the 18th December and have not been advised otherwise.

I know that many families have already been impacted by partial closures here and in neighbouring schools. We fully recognise the disruption this causes to pupil's learning, to parent/carers' work arrangements and to family life. Wherever possible we will seek to minimise this impact while maintaining the safety of pupils and staff as our number one priority.

LATEST TESTING ADVICE

As indicated in our letter this Monday, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB) have temporarily altered guidance on testing to advise that anyone who is '**generally unwell**' should seek a test.

We would normally expect that a few pupils may have mild cold symptoms at this time of year which do not prevent them from attending school. This remains the case.

However, given the ABUHB advice, we are requesting that if your child has symptoms that mean they are not well enough to attend school (i.e. they are generally unwell), they should be tested to rule out coronavirus as a possibility.

This is a temporary measure until the end of this term because of the current high rates of transmission.

To cope with additional demand, in addition to the two testing centres at Rodney Parade, Newport and Cwm, Ebbw Vale, ABUHB is currently providing temporary walk-up testing sites in Torfaen. Details of locations and times of operation vary so please check the ABUHB Facebook page for the latest information: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/AneurinBevanHealthBoard/>

Remember: any child being tested should not return to school until a negative test result is received.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping to keep our school and community safe.

CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION

Pontypool Community Council is running a Christmas Card Competition for all Torfaen residents. Entries are requested for a card design or a Christmas card verse. Photos can be emailed to pontypool@pontypoolcc.gov.uk by the 10th December at the latest. There are prizes of £60, £40 and £30 for the top three winners in each category. Good luck!

**Torfaen Temporary COVID-19
Test Centres**

WELSH GOVERNMENT (WG) WELL-BEING SURVEY (Years 4, 5 & 6)

The Welsh Government are conducting a study into the immediate and long-term effects of the pandemic on children's mental health, well-being and physical activity levels. The aim is to identify areas of particular concern, geographically and socially, to inform Welsh Government funding priorities.

Children in Years 4, 5 and 6 are being asked to complete an age-appropriate online survey at home and perhaps to wear an activity monitor (like a FitBit) for one week.

If you agree, your child will be asked to complete the questionnaire (should take 10-15 minutes) and some children will be selected to wear the activity monitor. Both will be repeated at a second time point a few months later.

Please click on [this link](#) (English version) to read more about the survey. If you are happy for your child(ren) to participate, please complete the parental consent form which you will find in the same link.

Alternatively you can access the information, consent form and survey via:

<https://swansea.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/the-effects-of-covid-19-on-children>

Researchers are hoping to recruit as many parents as possible before Christmas and the children's part of the study will take place in January.

CHRISTMAS CARDS & SCHOOL CHRISTMAS APPEAL

As a result of the safety arrangements we have in school at present, we will not be running our normal recycled christmas card sale to raise funds for charity. We are also asking that children do not bring cards into school for friends as we are minimising the sharing/handling of items and their transfer between homes.



In previous years the Eco Committee have recycled cards for display on the school tree in return for a donation to Crisis, the national charity supporting people out of homelessness. The need for this support has not diminished this year and we are keen to continue helping the work of Crisis.

To enable this we have set up a Justgiving page for staff, children and parents to make donations. We appreciate that Christmas is a costly time of year for everyone and would be grateful for donations however small. Perhaps part of the cost of not supplying your child with cards for friends could go to this purpose so that children can make a contribution themselves.

The donations page is available at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/georgestreetprimarycrisismasappeal2020>

All of the funds raised will go directly to the charity and help to provide places for homeless people to stay over Christmas together with essential food and festive treats. To find out more about the work of Crisis and how donations are used please visit: <https://www.crisis.org.uk/>

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

In addition to the good news about vaccines that has been reported recently, we have some positive trends to report in school.

1. Following alterations to our arrangements for pupils arriving late, I am pleased to report that nearly all pupils are now arriving at school on time and that disruption to learning in classes has effectively ceased.
2. Overall attendance for the year to date also reached 91% last week, continuing the steady increase from 85% at the start of term.
3. An increasing number of parents/carers are helping to observe guidance about Hands-Face-Space by wearing face coverings at the beginning and end of the day.

Thank you all for your support!

Kind regards,

A. Brasington