



LEARN TOGETHER

'Let's learn to enjoy, achieve, respect and nurture together'

19th May 2020

Dear Parent / Carer

As we approach the end of this half term, I would once again like to thank you for the support you have given our school throughout this unprecedented situation that we find ourselves in.

We have seen so many lovely things that your children have been doing and heard about many others.

We also have some lovely news of our own. Mr Williams, class teacher in Cadair Idris became a dad to baby Arthur a couple of weeks ago. Congratulations to Mr & Mrs Williams and their new family.

If you / your child haven't contacted school but would like us to celebrate what your child has been doing – whether that is having fun outside, baking, reading, online activities or doing some of the tasks set by school, please get in touch with your child's teacher on Seesaw or me personally at edwardsc44@hwbcymru.net. We love hearing from your children.

I would like to also again thank our amazing staff team. Their creativity and innovation, responding very quickly to providing online learning and support for families has been second to none. Just like many of you, they have been working hard from home, working on a rota in school providing childcare, home-schooling their own children, looking after a home and caring for young children / other family members.

Next week is half term and although school will be open during the week to care for the children of keyworkers who have booked childcare, we will not be providing additional online work. It is important that everyone, children, families and school staff have a break where they can.

School staff will be responding to messages this week, after that they will provide work / respond to messages after Monday 1st June once again.

Therefore if you have an urgent query, please ensure that you have contacted your child's class teacher by Thursday afternoon at the latest.

A range of tasks will continue to be offered each week after half term for your child to choose from, we have taken this approach, in the hope that choosing one or two activities (or more if you wish) is manageable. As we have said all along, please just encourage your child to do as many as you as a family can manage. We know that lots of children have also been accessing Hwb, BBC Bitesize and Oak National Academy online support, amongst others. Keeping up with reading and some basic literacy and numeracy is enough.

There is no pressure from us for any family to access lots of tasks. I can't say strongly enough, how important it is that your child feels safe and happy, this will reduce any anxiety they may be experiencing.

As more time has gone on, you may have begun to become increasingly worried about your child's learning or be finding it more difficult to motivate your child/ren. This is all normal, as an adult, it is difficult to feel motivated and continue normal work when we are out of routine. Our children are no different. If you are struggling to engage your child, please don't worry, take a break and do something else. Nobody will be judging how little or how much work your child has done. Please take that pressure off yourselves, we will work with all of the children when it is safe for them to return to school whenever that may be.

Our Educational Psychologist has provided some good support around home learning which is on our school website on the Safeguarding and Support page in the parent section entitled 'Teaching my child during the COVID-19 pandemic' – it focusses on *'it is okay not to feel okay'* and has some really supportive advice.

At present, I do not have any further information about the situation with schools in Wales. As a teacher and headteacher, some of the pictures of schools / classrooms / playgrounds and questions around PPE that I have seen in the media fill me with sadness and dread.

Schools are social places – children and adults thrive on this and our success comes from the fantastic relationships that we have. Although we have already begun to think about how schools will be repurposed again, over the coming few weeks, we will be tasked with creating complex plans. I want to reassure you again, that we will be consulting with all stakeholders and will be sharing any plans that we have fully with you when WG inform us. This will help you make your own decisions about what is most precious to you – your children.

I feel fortunate to be a headteacher in Wales. Our Education Minister, Kirsty Williams is working with a range of advisors to look at ways that schools can operate in the future and appears to be listening to the concerns of parents and school staff. The Minister is offering a live 'Ask Kirsty' session on Twitter tomorrow, Wednesday 20th May 5pm-6pm. You can post any questions and watch the session if you would like to on @wgmin_education

The Children's Commissioner for Wales and WG are also asking for the views of children. They have an information Hub for children on <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/coronavirus/> and the survey can be found on <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/coronavirusandme/> Although it mentions children 7-18 years old, there is support for accessible versions for younger children and children with additional needs. The closing date is 27th May.

Although we do not know what the next phase in Wales is going to be, as a school we are working closely with Wraparound Care Club to look at possible childcare needs for the Summer holiday. Nothing has been finalised, we will share more information about this as the expectations / restrictions become clearer, a little nearer the time.

In the meantime, to support us to look ahead we ask that if you are a keyworker of a child in our school and are in a position to book leave that you may need to do this for the last week of the Summer holidays (24th – 31st August which includes Bank Holiday Monday on 31st August).

We will keep everyone updated about childcare in preparation for the Summer holidays as we receive more information about this. We just wanted to give as much notice as possible for anyone booking leave, in the event that this is necessary.

Finally, I would like to end by thanking and recognising everyone for the wonderful job that we are all doing in these extremely difficult times. Going to work, juggling home working and home schooling, possible pressure from employers, additional cleaning and caring for young children / family members who may be shielding is no easy task and must not be underestimated.

I am holding on to the positives, in that we have built stronger relationships and really shown each other such care, consideration and kindness in our school and local communities, responding to situations that we never thought in our lifetimes, we would have to.

It goes without saying that we miss your children so very much. Sending lots of love and best wishes to the children and you as families from everyone at Barker's Lane.

Look after yourselves and keep safe.

Warm wishes


Mrs Edwards