



St. Joseph's RC High School

Ysgol Uwchradd Gatholig Joseff Sant

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Headteacher/Pennaeth: Mr T Brown B.A (Hons) M.A NPQH

September 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

Firstly, I should like to wish everyone a happy new academic year. I hope that all of our families have had a lovely summer and that our students are returning feeling refreshed and ready for the new school year. A special welcome to our new Year 7 students and their families.

You may have seen in the local press, or heard through word of mouth, that our GCSE and A level students have achieved huge success again this summer. We are immensely proud of them and wish them the very best in their next steps. This reflects a trend of sustained excellence at the school. In August, the *Western Mail* newspaper published its '*Real Schools Guide: The top state secondary schools*' and we were pleased to be the top rated secondary school in South East Wales and amongst the top 5% of secondary schools across Wales. We are not complacent however and you can be confident that we will work with you to ensure all our pupils flourish at the school.

Communication 2016/2017

We are constantly looking to work with our families to ensure that communication is effective in all aspects of school life. We believe we need to review the way in which we correspond with each other to ensure we have high quality, accurate and timely dialogue, ensuring that we use our resources wisely and obtain value for money. Many of our families have expressed to us that communication via e-mail and text is their preferred method of communication. Last March I wrote to you to introduce a new school on-line payment and communication system 'Schoolcomms'. The letter provided instructions on downloading the "School Gateway" app in preparation for the system going live in March 2016.

I am pleased to be able to inform you that the system has been operational for almost 6 months and is working very well with many parents having chosen to download the free Schoolscomms smartphone app and pay for school meals online via debit or credit cards. This has also enabled parents and carers to monitor meal balances, top up the cards 24/7 remotely via their smartphones and view items purchased by their children during the school week.

As well as making it easier via Schoolcomms for parents to pay at any time, we have also witnessed a reduction in the amount of cash being carried around the school, reduced queues at our card terminals, as well as saving the school time and money on administration.

I am aware that a number of parents and carers have been calling the school to ask for instructions regarding downloading the app. If you haven't done so as yet, you can still do so by following the simple instructions below:-

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'Serving God Through Learning Together'

'Yn gwasanaethu Duw trwy ddysgu gyda'n gilydd'

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If you have a smartphone, you can download the "School Gateway" app from the app store (Android and iPhone). By doing this, both you and the school avoid incurring charges for text messages, and future message exchanges will be free. It is quick and easy to do. All you need is the e-mail address and mobile phone number that the school holds on record for you. Alternatively, you can visit the website www.schoolgateway.com and click on "new user". You will receive a text message with a PIN number to log into School Gateway. If you experience any trouble when logging in, please contact the school on **(01633) 653112** and we will update your details on SIMS. Details on downloading the app are also available via our school website. This will also have benefits moving forward, as you will be able to pay instalments for higher value/foreign trips using your debit or credit card.

From this September our aim is to manage all of our communications with parents via e-mail. We will e-mail copies of letters etc. directly to parents/carers and will no longer send them home via pupils or in the post. If you do not have access to the internet at home, work or via phone then please contact us on the above number so that we can arrange an alternative means of communication.

I appreciate that this is a change of working and there may be some initial disruption. However, I hope you will understand the reasons for making such a change since it will allow us to communicate with you more quickly and effectively, with the added benefit of saving the school administrative time and money.

iPads

For any parent/carer who has yet to order an iPad through the school, please note that the portal www.cpu.co.uk/mobilelearning will re-open on Friday 16 September and will remain open until Friday 30 September. Ordering instructions can be found on the school website. If you require any further information please ring 01633 653113 and a member of staff will be happy to assist.

Over the next week or so, senior staff will be writing to you, via our new system, to introduce themselves and provide information about key aspects of school life. I thank you in advance for your support and wish all of our students a happy and successful academic year at the school.

Yours sincerely



Trevor Brown
Headteacher