

Virtual View FROM THE TOP



Friday 29th January 2021

The Principal's Update

As the days are becoming longer, it feels very much like spring is on its way, as the daffodil and crocus bulbs all around Howell's are starting to show their green shoots above the ground. Inside, too, there is feeling of spring cleaning and getting ready to welcome students back as soon as we can, with doors and windows receiving a fresh coat of paint.



This week I was delighted to hold Zoom meetings for students and parents in Year 11 to talk about certification and examinations. I very much hope everyone found the meetings useful and allayed some of the concerns students and parents may have had.

In order to aid teaching and learning, I would like to remind everyone that students should have their cameras turned on during lessons unless there are exceptional circumstances. It's so important that teachers can see the students to ensure that they are engaging fully with the lesson, and I can't tell you how dispiriting it is as a teacher to be faced with a panel of black squares where their smiling faces should be. Microphones should also be turned off unless the teachers' instructions are otherwise. I would be very grateful if you could remind your daughters of the importance of this. A member of the school office will be phoning home for any student who does not have their camera switched on.

I wanted to remind you that any student who is struggling with the lack of face to face school contact can self refer to our School Counsellor Graeme Layzell. He can be contacted by email at G.Layzell@how.qdst.net. You or your daughter can also contact her head of year or form tutor.

It is an exceptionally busy time for our teachers at the moment and I know they are receiving a lot of emails. Please be aware that I am encouraging teachers to be away from their screens whenever they can. It is not my expectation that they respond to emails after 5pm or at weekends. If you have an enquiry of a very urgent nature please email me at sally.davis@how.qdst.net.

Hannalise chosen to be a member of the Young People's Advisory Panel

Hannalise G, Year 10, has been chosen to be a member of the Young People's Advisory Panel to work with Sally Holland, the Children's Commissioner for Wales. [Click here](#) for more information.

Mali cast in a production at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

Congratulations to Year 8's Mali J who has been cast in a production at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. [Click here](#) for more information.

English-Speaking Union Public Speaking Competition

Congratulations to the Year 11 students who participated in the very first online English Speaking Union Public Speaking Competition on Thursday evening via Zoom. [Click here](#) for more information

Grace wins regional semi-final of the GDST Chrystall Carter Public Speaking Prize

Many congratulations to Grace M in Year 11 who has won the regional semi-final of the GDST Chrystall Carter Public Speaking Prize. [Click here](#) for more information.

February Love Reading Challenge

Love Reading? After St Dwynwen's Day this week, and Valentine's Day on the horizon, what better time to celebrate our love of literature? We can't wait to see the books you recommend, and the wonderful 'I Love Reading' posters which will adorn your windows. All entrants will be entered into a raffle to win a prize. [Click here](#) for more information.

Creative Crunch

Stars are what we asked for, and stars are what we got! Last week's Creative Crunch produced a galaxy of poetry, essays and photos exploring the theme of 'Stars', produced by some of our very talented creatives. [Click here](#) for more information. This week's challenge: Mesmerised by a murmururation? Spellbound by sparrows? With this weekend's RSPB 'Big Bird Watch' coming up, let's fly towards February with poems, photos, pictures, prose, posters and crafts which celebrate BIRDS!

Introducing Miss Roberts

We are delighted to introduce Miss Roberts, who joined us as a music teacher at the start of term. [Click here](#) to find out more about her!

Howell's Virtual Choir

After the great success of *True Colours* during the summer 2020 lockdown, we are putting together a virtual choir performance of the Welsh folk song *Sosban Fach*. Students have been sent an email from Director of Music Ms Edwards with details of how to take part. The deadline for uploading is **12pm on Wednesday 10th February** so please ensure your daughter is aware of this if she wishes to be a part of this fantastic opportunity.

Making Music, Making Friends

During lockdown, the music service has been running its groups online, keeping students across Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan connected through music. This term they are welcoming new members as they prepare for a very special Welsh celebration in March. They are offering an Ensemble Passport for £10 per pupil for the term, which covers as many groups as you like. For details on the ensembles and how to register please [click here](#).

Howell's Virtual Tour

We are delighted to share with you our new virtual tour which you can take by [clicking here](#). Please do share with anyone you think might be interested in visiting Howell's.

RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

I think for many of us during these periods of restricted social mobility and home lockdowns, looking out into our gardens and observing nature has been a most welcome therapeutic break. I personally have enjoyed seeing blackbirds and robins coming down to feed, a baby blue tit poking its head out from the birdbox and making its first flight. I have also enjoyed observing families of sparrows with their wings out sunbathing in rows along the fence, or frenziedly splashing away and barging each other out of the bird bath. This weekend, take some time out and participate in the RSPB 2021 Big Garden Birdwatch; just follow along [here](#) to see how.
Dr Langford, Eco School Coordinator

National Apprenticeship Event:

- Monday 8th February, 3pm - 5pm
- 8 different apprentice highlight journeys
- Open to all year groups in Year 10, Year 11, Year 12 & Year 13
- Opportunity to ask questions and find out about other young people's career journeys
- Learn about different types of apprenticeships, some myth busting and a few prizes along the way!

[Click here](#) to register.

Royal Air Force Learn Live Online Careers Broadcast – 3 Feb 2021

Following on from last year's successful virtual careers event, The Royal Air Force has decided to run another virtual session to assist signposting our young people to the range of fantastic employment opportunities available within the Royal Air Force. [Click here](#) for details.

HSBC Work Experience Programme for Years 11,12 and 13

HSBC's UK Work Experience Programme is for students looking for a work experience placement with a leading global bank. The programme provides opportunities to gain some hands-on experience, develop knowledge of banking and financial services, and explore the careers available at HSBC in the UK. [Click here](#) for more information.

One Planet Cardiff

As part of the One Planet Cardiff Strategy, Cardiff Council's ambitious plan to become carbon neutral by 2030, Cardiff Youth Council is asking the city's young people to express their opinions and offer ideas on how we can improve our city and our planet. More can be seen about the strategy by [clicking here](#). This is a fantastic opportunity for students to make their voices heard. [Click here](#) to complete a short questionnaire and to help shape the future of Cardiff. Before completing the questionnaire students might like to read the BBC Bitesize article that helps us learn more about being carbon neutral by [clicking here](#).

GDST Talks

The next speaker on Friday 5th February is Marissa Carranini on *Encouraging Your Child To Eat Well: Healthy Eating for Sport and Activity*. Nutritional therapist Marissa Carranini works with clients to normalise and simplify food and healthy eating. In this talk, hosted by GDST Consultant Teacher for Sport and PE Alexis Williamson-Jones, Marissa will speak to parents and students about how to eat optimally for sport and activity, including good things to eat before and after training, and whether there is really any benefit in so-called sports drinks. Whilst the focus of the advice is on students doing sport, much is of relevance to everyone, and is part of a wider series of talks around addressing disordered eating and encouraging healthy eating habits. A previous talk is available [here](#).

GDST Talks with Marissa Carranini on How to Encourage Your Child To Eat Well: Healthy Eating for Sport and Activity will take place on Friday 5th February at 4pm via Zoom.

This event is suitable for parents with children in Year 5 to 13. To book your place, click [here](#).

Wales Wellbeing Survey

During the summer we supported the Wales Wellbeing survey which looked at levels of wellbeing and psychological distress in the Welsh population during the Covid-19 pandemic. These findings helped the NHS in Wales understand and respond to the mental health needs of the population during the initial stages of the pandemic. Please see a summary of previous findings here: <https://wales-wellbeing.co.uk/en/covid19-wellbeing-survey-results>

A second Wales Wellbeing survey has been launched that aims to evaluate how the wellbeing needs of the population are changing over the course of this pandemic. The survey is a collaborative effort between Swansea University, Cardiff University and the 7 Welsh Health Boards. If you would like to participate you can access the survey via the following link: <http://bit.ly/wales-wellbeing-survey-2>

I hope you have a great weekend and enjoy the snow if we have any!

Sally Davis, Principal