



10 December 2019

Dear Parent/Carer,

Headteacher's End of Term Letter

As the Autumn Term draws to an end, I wanted to write to you to provide an update about the life of the school. It has been a busy and exciting term, with a full programme of visiting speakers and workshops. In October, your child voted for their priorities as part of the UK Youth Parliament's 'Mark Your Mark' ballot. The top two issues selected in St Teilo's were youth knife crime and environmental protection. We've listened and knife crime and gang culture has formed the focus of our extra-curricular PSE programme this term. Children have been busy fundraising, with £800 donated by wearing red for Show Racism the Red Card and £900 raised for vulnerable families at the Christmas Fayre. A highlight of the autumn has been the St Teilo's International Food and Culture Festival; what a celebration of identity and diversity! I am so proud to lead a school in which we are all different, all equal and very much one #TeamTeilo.

School development planning

St Teilo's remains exceptionally popular, with over 450 Year 6 into Year 7 applications for the coming academic year. The school is also successful, with a very small gap in performance between our most advantaged and most disadvantaged pupils and a 'green' national categorisation (meaning the school is highly effective with a track record of sustaining excellence). However, I am eager to secure further improvements and have set out some new, ambitious targets in our School Development Plan. These targets focus on three areas: improving attainment, improving behaviour and improving wellbeing. You will see an echo of our school mission here – to improve excellence, increase equity and deepen faith. Therefore, as the year unfolds, you will hear more from me about the changes we are introducing to make St Teilo's an even better place to be. I would love to hear from you if you have any reflections which you would like to share on any of these three priority areas.

A new structure to the school day

One of the key strategies to help us achieve our goal of improving attainment, behaviour and wellbeing is to rethink the structure of the school day. Children have told me that a lunch break of half an hour is too short to balance eating, socialising and seeking help with learning. Teachers, too, do not have the time to take a meaningful break whilst also providing support to pupils. I would like to propose an alternative, which we will trial over the coming days. This involves reducing lessons from 1 hour in length to 55 minutes and extending lunch break from 30 minutes in length to 55 minutes. The 25-minute break time will remain unaffected, as will the start and end time of the day. This brings with it some logistical challenges which will we 'iron out' during the trial period. Of course, any feedback you have during the trial would be gratefully received at headteacher@stteilos.com.

Dining

I wrote to you at the beginning of the year to set out plans for improving the quality of food in the school. We have now worked through several iterations of the menu to find a selection of meals that are healthy and balanced and which children enjoy. I am pleased that all meat served in the school is now Halal and the range of meals offered for vegetarians has significantly improved. There is still more for us to achieve so if your child has views which they would like to share, please encourage them to speak to their Faith Family representative, Form Tutor or see me.

The new curriculum for Wales

You may be aware that Wales is undergoing a 'once-in-a-lifetime' change in the paradigm of education. This vision is to be fully realised for Year 7 in September 2022, so we still have some breathing space! However, it is important that we begin to undertake some classroom-based research to consider what changes we wish to make and when. You may notice that your child takes part in some lessons over the coming months which feel a little different. They may engage in debates or philosophy and ethics lessons, for example. This should prove interesting and fun and will help us in designing our new curriculum moving forward. There will also be changes to the way in which we report progress to you, as national curriculum levels are phased out. You can find out more about the new curriculum for Wales by visiting <https://gov.wales/curriculum-wales-2022>.

Your views matter!

This is an exciting time in the history of St Teilo's. With a growing reputation for high-quality care, excellent progress in learning and an exciting worshipful 'heartbeat' to the school, there is much to celebrate. We continue to move forward apace, however. Parents and carers are very welcome to be part of this journey. If you would like to be more involved, or have useful insights to share, please contact me at headteacher@stteilos.com. Whilst I cannot guarantee that I respond personally to each email, your submission will be directed to the most appropriate member of the senior leadership team. So remember, your views matter!

Finally, it remains for me to wish you all the blessings of Christmas and a joyous New Year. I am mindful that, for many, the festive season is a difficult and challenging one. As always, if your family would like some support then please reach out to your child's Achievement Leader. We would be happy to provide a food parcel, some gifts or clothing if things are a little tough. Conversely, donations are gratefully received.

With every blessing for a peaceful Christmas,

Mr I Loynd
Headteacher

'For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'
Isaiah 9:6 (NRSVA)