

20 July 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

It is with great pleasure that I write to you at the end of our first year as Abertillery Learning Community.

This year has been an extraordinary one. Not only have we come together from 5 schools into one, but we have come together as one Governing Body, one Leadership Team, one staff room and most importantly as one student body. The year has presented us with many new and exciting challenges both logistically and operationally. Together we have worked tirelessly to overcome these challenges, whilst ensuring that the learners are always at the heart of all that we do. The overarching aim of the Learning Community was and still is to deliver the best possible educational experience for all the young people of Abertillery. Whilst many of the changes we have implemented have been unsettling, we are now looking forward to a period of stability. My appointment as Principal gives us that stability and I am thrilled to be able to continue working with such a fantastic team, to develop a school that will deliver educational excellence for the whole community.

So, what has year one looked like? Well over the year we have engaged in countless activities that have developed both learners and staff. We ensured that all learners have had the same opportunities as before, whilst adding to them wherever we could. We have increased transition activities to ensure a smooth move to the secondary Campus for all our Y6 learners. They have taken part in a wide range of activities both at the secondary site and around the town. We have shared excellent teaching practice across the community with secondary and primary staff delivery exciting new initiatives and sharing specialist subject knowledge. Learners have taken part in Aberfest and Winterfest, they have received specialist teaching in PE & Drama, we have held combined concerts and attended events as one school, finally combining last week with an enormously successful sports activity day when over 450 learners worked with local clubs and organisations.


We have also been working hard behind the scenes. Bringing five schools together as you can imagine is no small challenge, but one which all members of the community have risen to. We are working to align structures, systems and policies to ensure that all learners, staff and parents get a consistent experience no matter which campus they are based on. We have streamlined processes to ensure that we are not duplicating work and most importantly we have begun to develop a consistent approach to teaching and learning that will ensure that all learners get the best quality education possible.

Moving forward however we still have a lot of work to do. We are thrilled that we will be continuing our work with Welsh Government on the development of the new curriculum for Wales. We are continuing our work with Governors and the local authority to establish ourselves as the first-choice school for families in the community. We are also keen to continue developing our relationships with parents and as such have calendared a series of parent forum meetings throughout the next academic year. Excitingly we are working closely with the LA to develop improved links and opportunities to engage with local businesses across both the town and wider in Blaenau Gwent.

Most importantly however is our continued drive to improve both the all-round education and subsequently the standards achieved by all our learners be they Nursery or Year 11. To that end we are thrilled to be welcoming several excellent new staff to the community in September.

There are also several operational issues that I would also like to draw your attention to.

Firstly, as you will be aware from previous correspondence, Abertillery Learning Community's Governing Body undertook a consultation exercise in relation to proposed changes to the school day to maximise opportunities for learners and staff to work together more effectively across the campuses. This process closed in March and it was agreed that the school days for all campuses would be more aligned from September. The new times of the school day have been shared with you previously however I thought I'd share them again as a reminder.

			
Primary Campus	Start	Lunch	Finish
Nursery AM	9.00am		11.30am
Nursery PM	12.30pm		3.00pm
Foundation Phase	9.00am	12.00pm - 1.00pm	3.00pm
KS2	9.00am	12.15pm - 1.00pm	3.00pm
Secondary Campus	Start	Lunch	Finish
Secondary	8.45am	1.00pm - 1.30 pm	2.50pm

Secondly, I would like to remind you that the new school year for all learners will begin on September 6<sup>th</sup>. This will follow two INSET days for staff on the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>. Term dates are available on the school website for the year and the other INSET day for next year is Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January. The other two INSET days will be taken as Twilight sessions for staff in order that school can close for the year on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2018.

With regards to the school website, I would urge you all to visit it regularly during the year. The website going forward will be the first place to visit for all information about the school. We are currently reviewing what information needs to be added to ensure that parents are fully informed about everything that goes on in school. This will include things like the staff senior staff structure, any letters we send home and important dates and policies. Please feel free to share any thoughts on ways we could improve this service.

Finally, I would again like to thank you all for your continued support this year. The role of Principal in Abertillery is a role that holds much responsibility and a role that I am truly honoured to hold. The opportunity to continue working with the whole community excites me greatly and I am looking forward to the successes we will undoubtedly be sharing in the coming years. I wish you all a happy and safe summer and look forward to seeing you all again in September.

Mr Nathan Jenkins



Principal