

Headteacher **Tim Williams** welcomes you to this second information newsletter.

"As we come to the end of the second term for our new school, our emphasis will now change to planning the move to our new building. This is whilst still maintaining the support we are providing for our pupils in Years 10 and 11 in preparing for their external examinations. It has been far from ideal running the school over two separate sites and I would like to thank all pupils, parents, Governors and members of staff for their patience and resilience. Everyone is really looking forward to having all pupils and staff under one roof enabling us to really start fully achieving our ambitions for everyone in the local community. Very exciting times ahead!"

Countdown to the "grand move"

Our new building will be handed over to us on April 24th but we will not be moving in until the end of June. This decision has been made to ensure pupils sitting their external examinations are not affected by any disruption.



Timeline:

Week commencing 19th June 2017

Staff pack up their resources on the two existing sites

Week commencing 26th June 2017

Week of closure days for pupils. Staff make the move

Week commencing 3rd July 2017

Pupils and staff all resume normal learning on new site

Pupils and staff have three weeks in the new building before the summer holidays commence on 21st July

Our new school building

The new building is almost ready and it's clear that it is going to be a superb learning environment for our 1200 pupils. From the spacious, soundproofed classrooms; to the theatre standard school hall; to the professional sports' facilities; to the modern, multi serving area food hall; right up to the communal learning areas on the extra wide corridors, the whole site exudes quality and well-thought-out design.



Uniform

I hope you agree that our new school uniform looks very smart and is befitting of our image and profile in the community. The school has received many positive comments about how our pupils look and a number have gone on to say that it is the smartest uniform in the whole of Caerphilly.



The vast majority of pupils wear the uniform with pride but we do need parental support to ensure that standards are consistently good across the whole school. Of particular concern, in a small number of cases, is pupils wearing 'jeans type' trousers, the length of some girls' skirts being too short and/or trainer liner socks being worn at times which leaves a visible gap between shoes and trousers. As stated on the school website, plain tailored trousers should be worn without visible zips and skirts should be worn at knee length.

A summer version of the uniform may be worn by pupils when they return after the Easter break. Instead of the shirt, tie and blazer, the approved white polo shirt, as shown, may be worn. The approved school jumper may also be worn if needed but no t-shirt should be worn under the polo shirt. In addition, if school coats are worn, they must still comply with the requirements as specified on the school website i.e. they must be dark coloured and plain.



Of course, pupils are welcome to continue wearing the normal school uniform, which includes the shirt, tie and an optional jumper and/or blazer, if they wish.

Integration and form groups

Pupils will be allocated new forms when they arrive in the new building and these will include pupils from both former Oakdale and Pontllanfraith schools. This will ensure that we become a fully integrated school from day one when together. Pupils may well find that they have a new form tutor but every effort will be made to ensure that individuals are with friends and are comfortable in their new environment. A series of planned events, including transporting all year groups up the new building at the start of June for ice-breaking activities, will ensure that the transition to the new school is as seamless as possible for all.



Year groups will be zoned, i.e. Year 7 on the ground floor, Years 8 & 9 on the middle floor and Years 10 & 11 on the top, allowing cohort communities to develop under the control of the respective Progress Manager. In addition, lockers will be provided in these designated areas for pupils to use.

School Transport

New bus routes and pick up points have not been finalised to date but will be by the end of May. This is because information on the 230 Year 7 pupils for September 2017 has to be included. We have been told that parents will be informed of all arrangements at the start of June.

Pupils will be issued with coloured bus passes and vehicles will have coloured signs in the windows so everyone can easily identify which bus they should get on. In addition, the school transport team will initially be on site, both in the morning and afternoon, to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Any concerns or queries over eligibility should be directed to the school transport team on: 01495 235151 or education-transport@caerphilly.gov.uk



SNIPPETS

- The school council recently visited the new building to have a look around. All were astonished by what their new school has to offer.



- Islwyn's Secondary Special Resource Base (SSRB) recently won a nationwide competition to win a brand new minibus. Mrs Watts and her team are hugely grateful for all that the Aviva Community Fund has done for our pupils.



- The school website, which is constantly being updated with news and information on the progress being made, can be accessed on www.islwynhigh.org

- GCSE results for our pupils sitting external examinations this year are released on Thursday 24th August.



- A series of open-visits will be arranged for when the school moves into its new building. This will allow parents and all members of the community to come and see our excellent facilities. Dates and times will be published closer to the time.