



## Newsletter & Updates

*Wednesday 20 December 2023*

Queen Elizabeth High School / Ysgol Uwchradd Y Frenhines Elisabeth



Dear Parent/Carer,

## Nadolig Llawn/Merry Christmas!

As we look forward to the Christmas Holidays and embrace the festive spirit, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our incredible staff, pupils, and all who have contributed to making this term a resounding success at Queen Elizabeth High School.

The energy and dedication showcased during the term were nothing short of exceptional. Our recent school show, "We Will Rock You," was a roaring triumph. The talent, enthusiasm, and hard work displayed by our students left us all in awe. A huge round of applause to the cast, crew, and everyone involved for their remarkable performances and commitment.

This Tuesday afternoon saw some fantastic, humorous and memorable performances from Canolfan Elfed students in their Christmas Show. The enthusiasm and hard work of staff and pupils was clearly on show. That afternoon also saw our rewards assembly for pupils with excellent attendance and /or high levels of Achievements Points. It was an enjoyable way to recognise the efforts and positive behaviour of so many of our pupils.











Beyond the stage, our students and staff have been demonstrating their commitment to our wider community. Sixth Form have completed their annual donation to the foodbank, and our Christmas Stocking Appeal has really taken off with much appreciated support from Carmarthenshire Round Table and Castell Howell. We have also been spreading joy through music by playing carols for the residents of Carmarthen and Cartref Cynnes, our local old people's home. Their efforts in bringing smiles and warmth to our community truly embody the spirit of giving and empathy, for which we are immensely proud.

Looking ahead to the upcoming term, we do so with great optimism and excitement. We believe in the potential and capabilities of our students and are committed to nurturing their growth and success. To ensure a fulfilling and rewarding experience, we would like to stress the importance of excellent attendance in the forthcoming term. Regular attendance supports academic achievement and social development; being in school with friends makes for happier pupils! Additionally, for pupils who do sometimes struggle, being in school gives them ready access to our caring and supportive pastoral teams. Your support in ensuring your child's punctuality and attendance is invaluable.

Fostering positive behaviour and attitudes towards others is a cornerstone of our school's values. Encouraging kindness, respect, and empathy forms the bedrock of our supportive school environment. We encourage all our students to embrace these values and contribute to creating a compassionate and inclusive atmosphere at Queen Elizabeth High School in 2024.







# Key Dates

- > Thursday 21st December – Last Day of Term – Christmas Activities
- > Friday 22nd December - INSET
- > Monday 8th January 2024 – INSET
- > Wednesday 10th January 2024 - External BTEC exams start GCSE and A-Level
- > Thursday 11th January 2024 - Year 10 and 11 External Science practical exams commence
- > Tuesday 16th January 2024 -
  - o *Year 11 English GCSE Group Controlled Assessments (all week)*
  - o *Year 12 and 13 mock examinations commence*
  - o *Year 7, 8 and 9 National Literacy and Numeracy tests commence*
- > Tuesday 16th January – Year 9 Options Evening Presentation
- > Monday 22nd January – Year 9 Full Report to parents/carers
- > Thursday 25th January – Year 9 Parents/Carers Evening
- > Tuesday 30th January – Year 9 Options Deadline
- > Wednesday 31st January – Deadline
- > Friday 2nd February - Year 11 – Full reports
- > Thursday 8th February – 6th Form Open Evening
- > Friday 9th February – KS5 Full Reports
- > Monday 12th February – Half Term









# Important Information



## ***Free School Meals – Are you claiming what you're entitled to?***

We are writing to you to encourage you to check if your child is entitled to receive free school meals. Free school meals are a vital support for many families, especially in these challenging times. They can help you save money, ensure your child gets a healthy and nutritious lunch, and also benefit the school through extra funding.

To qualify for free school meals, you must be receiving one of the following benefits:

- > ***Income Support***
- > ***Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance***
- > ***Income-related Employment and Support Allowance***
- > ***Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999***
- > ***Guaranteed element of Pension Credit***
- > ***Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)***
- > ***Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit***
- > ***Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)***

If you are not sure if you are eligible, and you do receive any of the benefits above we encourage you to take the time to apply, Carmarthenshire County Council will let you know what your eligibility status is. You can also find out more information about free school meals on Carmarthenshire County Council's website.

If you are eligible for free school meals, you may also be able to access additional grants and support from the government and other organisations. For example, you may be eligible for:

- > ***The Warm Home Discount Scheme, which gives a £140 rebate on your energy bills each winter***
- > ***The Cold Weather Payment, which provides £25 extra a week for colder periods***
- > ***The Food and Fun Programme, which offers free activities and meals for children during the school holidays***
- > ***Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) | GOV.WALES***
- > ***The Cost of Living Payment, which will give £900 to means-tested benefit claimants in three instalments over the financial year 2023-24***
- > ***Family Fund - If you have a disabled or seriously ill child under three, and would benefit from access to a car, the Family Fund Mobility Support programme could help***
- > ***The Disabled Facilities Grant, which helps pay for adaptations to your home to make it more accessible for a disabled person***





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CARMARTHEN  
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BUILDING, ROOFING  
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These are just some examples of the grants and support that you may be able to get if you claim free school meals. There are many more available, depending on your circumstances and needs. You can search for more grants on the Turn2us website or visit the Claim What's Yours page on Carmarthenshire County Council's website.

We hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity and apply for free school meals if you are eligible. It will make a big difference to your child's wellbeing and education, as well as providing additional support through the school's budget and resources. If you have any questions or need any help with your application, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## ***MISS SCHOOL, MISS OUT!***

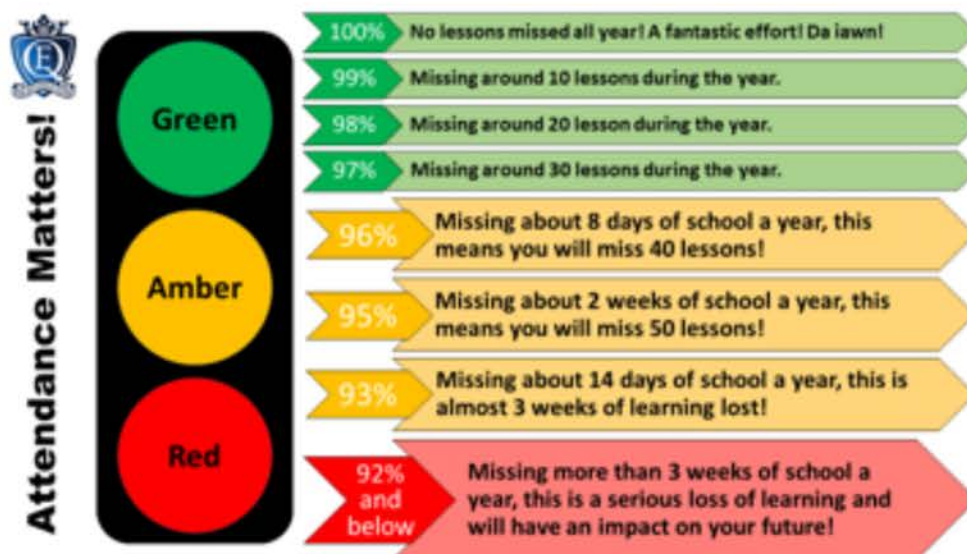
As we return to school in 2024, we need to stress the need for regular attendance.

There are lots of reasons why a child should attend school:

- ***To learn***
- ***To build confidence and self-esteem***
- ***To understand responsibility***
- ***To develop new skills***
- ***To grow as individuals***
- ***To gain qualifications***
- ***To make new friends, have fun and develop life skills***
- ***To develop awareness of other cultures***

***Excellent attendance at school allows a child to have the best possible start in life.***

Missing a day here or there might not seem like much, but absences add up. Two days absence a month adds up to 4 weeks missed in a year, and that means over 100hrs of teaching lost!



***Every school day counts, each day missed makes it harder to catch up, can lead to lower achievements in reading, writing and numeracy and impacts a child's ability to make important social connections.***





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Knowledge  
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Skills

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## *Expressions*

Our key tool for communicating with parents and carers is our Groupcall Xpressions App. We use this to keep parents/carers informed of important information regards school as well as parents/carers using the tool to access information on their child's progress, achievements and behaviour.

This is an essential tool. All parents and pupils should download and use the App in order to stay up to date on important matters in school.

## *FAQs*

### *What is Xpressions, what are Xpressions?*

Xpressions is a service, providing parents with an app to receive messages from the school. The app is available on iOS and Android, with plans to bring it to a web browser soon.

### *How does the app work?*

The app receives messages, called Xpressions, sent from the school. They are similar to WhatsApp or iMessage, being transmitted over the internet rather than SMS text messages. Thousands of schools are using Xpressions, swapping out SMS and saving money in the process of communicating with their parents.

### *How do I get set up?*

When schools sign up to use Xpressions, they automatically create an account for each parent to log in. Rather than using a username and password system, Xpressions uses information that parents will always remember- their email address and mobile phone number.

While logged in, parents will receive a notification on their phone when a new Xpression has been sent to them from the school.

### *What can I do once I'm logged in?*

Within Xpressions, parents can access all messages that have been sent to them by the school. Depending on the product purchased by the school, parents may also have access to performance and progress information about their child, such as attendance, assessment, behaviour records and their timetable. Check with your school to learn more about the features you will have available.

### *Please follow the link below for more information:*

<https://www.qehs.carms.sch.uk/parent-carer-information/groupcall-xpressions/>



## Staff Leaving

We bid a fond farewell to Mrs Kirby, our Music Teacher. Who has made a fantastic contribution to Music in our school for over 13 years through tours, concerts, shows and Eisteddfod wins.

We wish Mrs Kirby all the very best in her future role as Head of Music at Dyffryn Taf School, hwyl fawr/best wishes from us all.





As we prepare to celebrate the joys of the festive season, let's carry this spirit of togetherness, gratitude, and optimism into the new term.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support and partnership in creating a nurturing educational journey for our students.

Wishing you all a merry and peaceful holiday season!

Kind regards,



Dave Williams  
Headteacher

