

Wireless Network used to combat truancy

- ***School Wireless Network Helps to Combat Truancy***

A SCHOOL in Barry has employed a new weapon in the battle against truancy - a Cisco Systems wireless network installed by Cardiff based Cisco Partner, Capital Network Solutions Ltd.

The new system at Bryn Hafren Comprehensive allows high speed, electronic registration every morning. As soon as a pupil is registered as absent, a text message is automatically sent to the parent's mobile phone.

Registration systems in schools have been increasingly under the spotlight since the murder of school boy Rory Blackhall earlier this year. Rory failed to arrive at school on the day he disappeared, but his absence was not reported until the end of the school day.

The pupils have each been issued with individual swipe cards, with memory chips that allow them to 'clock' in and out - even between classrooms. This means that both teachers and parents can be alerted far quicker if their child goes missing - even within school premises.

Bryn Hafren also plan to develop a system where parent's can check up on their children's whereabouts throughout the day online.

An element that may not be as popular with pupils is the text service that notifies parents when school reports are being sent home, and reminders of parents' evenings.

The hi tech wireless system at Bryn Hafren Comprehensive was installed by Cardiff based IT Networking company Capital Network Solutions, and is at a capability not seen by most small businesses, let alone schools.

The system marks a real investment in the school's technological future, as the capacity of the network is as yet nowhere near its full potential.

The prospective impact of the technology on teaching and learning is far reaching. Possible uses include video conferencing and debate between classes in different schools, high level scientific data analysis, or engaging in modern languages by having an electronic penfriend.

Pupils will also be able to save class work online and study at home, remotely through the Bryn Hafren website.



Teacher's lives have also been made easier by the new wireless system.

Every teacher issued with a laptop will be able to carry on with their work from any 'quiet' corner of the school, or work from home at night and email any materials for the following day directly to the school photocopiers and printers.

Sarah Edwards, business development director of Capital Network Solutions said:
"The far reaching benefits of introducing such a cutting edge network are enormous for both teachers and students. The ability to work flexibly, to access information from anywhere within the school or from home, to share resources and use the technology to enhance the whole learning experience for both teachers and pupils cannot be underestimated."

It's likely that some pupils will see some of this technology as 'Big Brother' but it seems beyond doubt that the new wireless network is a huge asset to parents, teachers and pupils themselves.