

Parent newsletter:

Middle school

Letter from Mrs Retallick, Headteacher

I have the pleasure in writing to you at the end of a very busy half term. It has been a half term of celebration, hard work and embedding our routines from last year. New routines and high expectations to ensure we make the most of every learning opportunity in each school day. I have enclosed our annual governors report to parents for your reference.

I am delighted to share with you that our Deputy Headteacher Mr Prygodzicz secured his own headship last week and will be leaving us at Christmas to become the new Headteacher at Ferndale Community School and we wish him the very best for the future. I will keep you updated on his replacement.

As you know, we want the very best for all of our children and our rules; be ready, be respectful and be responsible are embedded in all of our routines and actions. In light of pupil feedback, we are launching a refreshed approach to homework after half term and welcome your support with this. Further details on this are available later in the newsletter.

As we move into the months with more challenging weather, I would be grateful if you would encourage your child to attend school every day as we know that attendance has a significant impact on academic achievement. The NHS Wales website is particularly helpful with information about different ailments and illnesses and has a specific box with useful information about whether school attendance is advised with different conditions.

Ready to learn has launched this autumn term with good success to date. Listening to pupils, it is clear that this strategy has had a positive impact on the amount of learning taking place in lessons and has set a clear system that all understand well. We will continue to monitor and evaluate this provision, working alongside pupils to do so. My thanks for your support in this.

Have a wonderful half term break.

Kirsty Retallick

Letter from Mrs Danielle Lewis, Head of Middle School

Dear Parent,

It is my hope that this letter finds you healthy, happy and relaxed as we are now well into the first term in the middle school at Ysgol Nantgwyn and it gives me great pleasure to officially welcome everyone back to school.

All pupils have made a very positive start this term, demonstrating super behaviours for learning, good manners and lots of smiles. Pupils have settled in well with their new teachers and classrooms which has all contributed to a successful term. It is also fantastic to see all pupils, very smartly dressed and in the correct uniform, please keep it up!

After half term, each pupil will be issued with a new planner to record homework and any relevant information. I would just like to take this opportunity to ask that all pupils are sent to school with basic equipment for their lessons so they are fully equipped and ready for the day ahead.

Within the middle school, we proudly adopt a positive culture and ethos. Each term we will be focusing on promoting and recognising traditional values demonstrated by pupils. This term's value was 'kindness' where pupils were rewarded when they demonstrate random acts of kindness in school. Next term's focus will be 'respect'. Please feel free to support the promotion of these values at home and share with us any examples that could be celebrated.

We have a fantastic extra-curricular timetable in place for Middle School pupils, which we would like to encourage as many pupils as possible to attend. Please take a look at the attached timetable and if you have any queries, please contact the school.

We have already had extremely exciting, busy and enjoyable half term and I look forward to working with you all closely, so your child can continue to grow in confidence, with a love of learning and a determination to be the best person they can be.

Yours sincerely,

Danielle Lewis

For pupils based in Nant (Years 7-11)

In order to maintain clean and friendly eating facilities at school, we would like to ensure all hot food purchased in the Nant coffee shop and main hall are consumed within these facilities and not taken out on to corridors or elsewhere in the school. All pupils have been informed of this but if you could just confirm this at home, it would be very much appreciated.

What are we learning this term?

The table below gives an outline of the areas that pupils are learning about from nursery through to year 8. Each year group explores a question in a number of different ways, through a range of different subjects.

| Year group | Theme |
|------------|--|
| Nursery | Mr Men and Little Miss What makes me 'me'? |
| Reception | Magical me Where do I fit in? |
| Year one | Our little human planet How are people alike and different? |
| Year two | Mirror, mirror on the wall...there is a leader in us all How do we work together to make rules and decisions? |
| Year three | Ripples How do status, roles and role models influence us and how do my actions affect the people around me? |
| Year four | What makes us human? How does our body and brain function? |
| Year five | Who am I and who is everybody else? How do different skills and qualities achieve different things? |
| Year six | How does conflict affect us? |
| Year seven | What is my contribution to making the world a better place? |
| Year eight | What is my contribution to making the world a better place? |

School uniform—middle school

In our continued commitment to raise standards, it is essential that Ysgol Nantgwyn continues to develop a culture of high expectations and instil a consistent sense of pride amongst all pupils. I am writing to confirm the uniform expectations for all pupils at Ysgol Nantgwyn for September 2019. Please also note that the Summer Uniform applies until October half term.

Minimum uniform expectation

- Royal blue or navy sweatshirt or cardigan**
- White or royal blue polo shirt
- Grey formal bottoms or dress - trousers, skirt, pinafore or tartan skirt*
- Dark tights
- Black outdoor shoes

Dark colour coat

Optional uniform

All other parts of the school uniform are available for the middle school pupils and we would encourage pupils to move to the more formal uniform of white shirt and school tie, badged jumper and blazer, as they progress through middle school.

PE

- Black or Navy shorts, jogging bottoms or leggings
- Royal blue or white t-shirt
- Optional royal blue quarter zip sweatshirt

Trainers

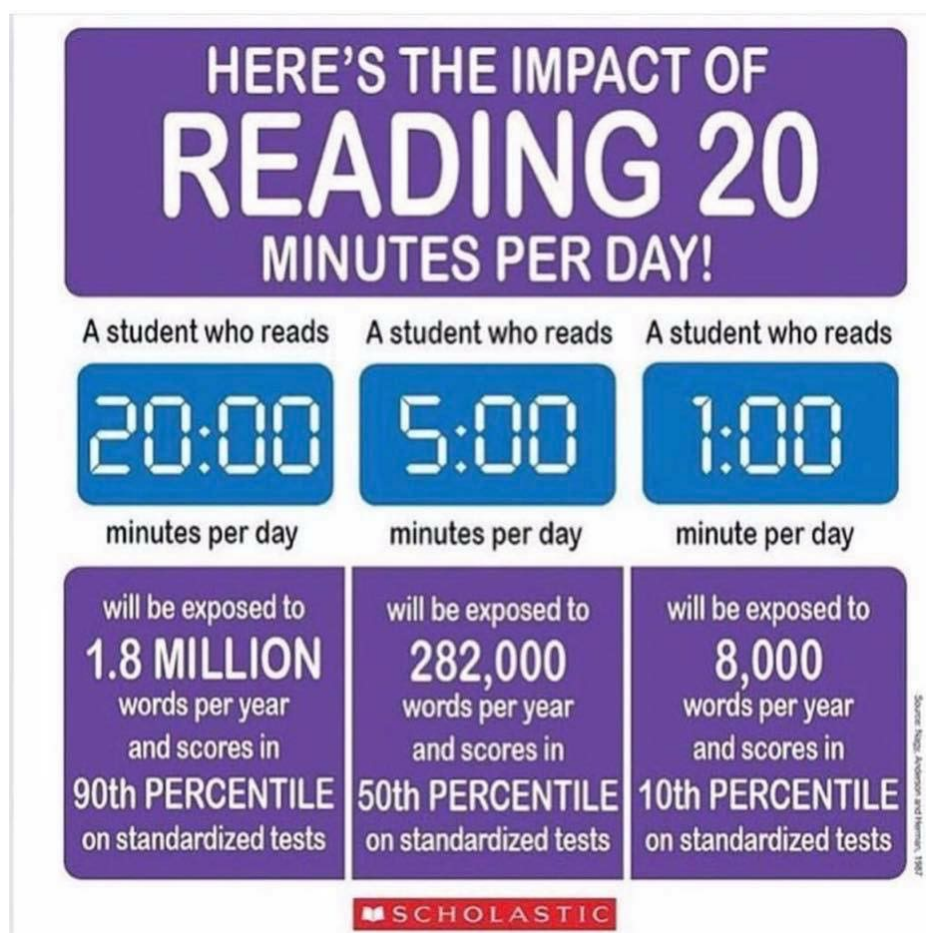
*Summer uniform can include tailored grey shorts, summer gingham navy or blue dress, white badged polo shirt.

**At least one visible item has to be badged

Reading at Ysgol Nantgwyn

At Ysgol Nantgwyn we are entirely committed to ensuring that, as a minimum expectation, all pupils are able to read at their chronological age. This is a core focus for all staff at the school as we know that when pupils are able to read in line with their chronological age, they are able to access all areas of the school curriculum and thrive in their learning. Over the course of the first year in Ysgol Nantgwyn a wide range of reading methods and interventions were implemented. These have been incredibly successful with many more pupils reading at their chronological age this September compared to September 2018. We have invested in Group Guided Reading for the Lower School so that pupils learn to take ownership for their reading and share the experience with their friends on a daily basis. In Gwyn Middle School we have invested over £1000 in new reading materials and appointed library monitors to create a positive reading culture that will stay with pupils throughout their education. In Nant, we have heavily invested in young adult fiction for the Library Resource Centre which is now opened and manned every lunchtime for pupils. Upper School also now has a supply of reading materials that can be used during registration time, should a pupil not have their own reading book with them. Reading takes place for Upper School pupils every Friday in registration.

This is a fantastic start to developing a reading culture and you are able to support this development at home. This infographic shows what an impact just 20 minutes of reading a day has on academic achievements.



Homework

Ysgol Nantgywn staff have been working to develop a revised homework policy across the school. The new policy is based on literacy, numeracy and the development of essential skills. At Ysgol Nantgywyn, homework activities are an important part of our home/school partnership and all pupils are expected to take part in a variety of homework tasks to enhance and support both their work in class and their progress in school. The homework will develop interest and engage pupils, as well as providing them with practise that they need to become secure in their learning and development of everyday skills. We would very much appreciate your support in encouraging your child to complete all homework set.

Middle school (Years 4, 5 and 6)

- **Reading** – Each teacher will provide at least one reading book per week for pupils to read. The day provided is based on the reading groups and the class teacher will inform parents of the relevant days. This will be published and shared on a regular basis. If a pupil finishes the book, then they are encouraged to bring the book back in and obtain a new one. There is no limit to reading!!

- **Spellings** – every Friday spelling tasks will provided to all pupils. This should be handed back in the following week.

- **Half termly homework menus** – Each half term pupils will be provided with a homework book/folder and suggested homework tasks to develop everyday skills, such as budgeting. Pupils will be expected to complete at least three of the homework tasks over a half term and record this in their homework books/folders to discuss with their class teacher.

- **Subject specific homework** – Pupils will be provided with one piece of homework in specific subject per half term. For example – one piece of Science homework that links to the topic being studied in lessons.

Middle School (Years 7 and 8)

- **Reading** - Pupils should be bringing their own reading book/materials in every day to read in form period. If they do not bring a book they will be provided with one to read in form period. At home, pupils should be encouraged to read for 20 minutes every day.

- **Spellings** – Caru Dysgu teachers will provide target spelling each week to all pupils.

- **Half termly homework menus** – Each half term pupils will be provided with a homework

and suggested homework tasks to develop everyday skills, such as recycling and environmental issues. Pupils will be expected to complete at least three of the homework tasks over a half term and record this in their homework books to discuss with their Caru Dysgu teacher.

•**Subject Specific homework** – Pupils will be provided with one piece of homework once a fortnight for all subjects. Pupils will be provided with clear expectations and deadlines for all homework set.

Christmas activities

We have a number of Christmas activities planned this year– final dates of these will come out to you shortly after half term.