

PARENT NEWSLETTER



November 2022

A NOTE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

A very big thank you from me to all parents for the support given so far this half term. As a mum of three children, I know that parenting is not the easiest of jobs (!) but it is one of the most important as the support that you give your child is critical in ensuring that they get to school every day and approach their learning positively and become increasingly independent in doing so.

It has been a very busy start to the second half term of the school year and the first couple of weeks with Mrs Retallick working her secondment elsewhere. It has been very positive - year 11 pupils have been preparing for their mock examinations which they are sitting this week, year 10 and 11 are preparing for their 'real' science practical, year 9s are trying out more discrete subjects as they move towards making their options next term, we have had our first parent assemblies for years 3 and 5 as well as the day to day learning, making sure that every pupil makes at least good progress every day.

We have taken the decision to reduce the number of newsletters that we send out so that we can take steps to change the type of information that we share with you. We intend to send one, bigger newsletter per calendar month that includes information for lower, middle and upper. As parents, you may be only interested in the bits that refer specifically to your child or children's year groups, however we hope that the information we provide will help you to get to know Ysgol Nantgwyn better.

This newsletter focuses on the curriculum that we have developed as a school since opening in September 2018.

We also start sending newsletters directly to pupils from Monday 28th November - these will be Parentmailed to you on the same day too so that you can see this information. We anticipate the 'Lower Leader', the 'Middle Messenger' and the 'Williams' Weekly' keenly.

To support families in celebrating what is the first normal Christmas in a few years, we have made the decision to make Friday 23rd December an INSET day however we do ask that you support us with our whole school attendance figures by ensuring that your child comes to school right up to and including Thursday 22nd December. There are lots of Christmas activities planned around the learning which will continue to the end of term - dates for the remainder of this half term are further on in this newsletter.

We have had celebrations around Children in Need and, this coming Friday, will ensure that every pupil that would like to can watch the Wales v Iran match. Those that fall into the 'less interested' category will be working with teachers to focus on more individual target work to push their learning along. All pupils are expected to come to school. We are quite frequently asked why we don't recognise and/or celebrate more charities/special events and days and also, when we do, why we don't necessarily have a non uniform day. Unfortunately, our attendance falls quite dramatically when we have a non uniform day and we receive a lot of feedback from pupils, in particular, but parents also about their worries about non uniform days and the potential costs of buying specific items and the latter is why we try to 'meet the middle ground' with pupils wearing school uniform with an accessory of their choice to mark the occasion. I recognise that we won't please everybody in doing this but I hope the rationale is understandable for all. The most important thing to us is that pupils are in school and discussing and celebrating various events with their friends. Working with the Pupil Leadership Team (PLT), pupils have nominated a small number of events to recognise and celebrate across the year.

This newsletter will share information with you on curriculum - how we develop and design what the pupils are learning so that you are informed and can use this in your conversations with your child.

With warm wishes,

Ms Laura Morris
Headteacher

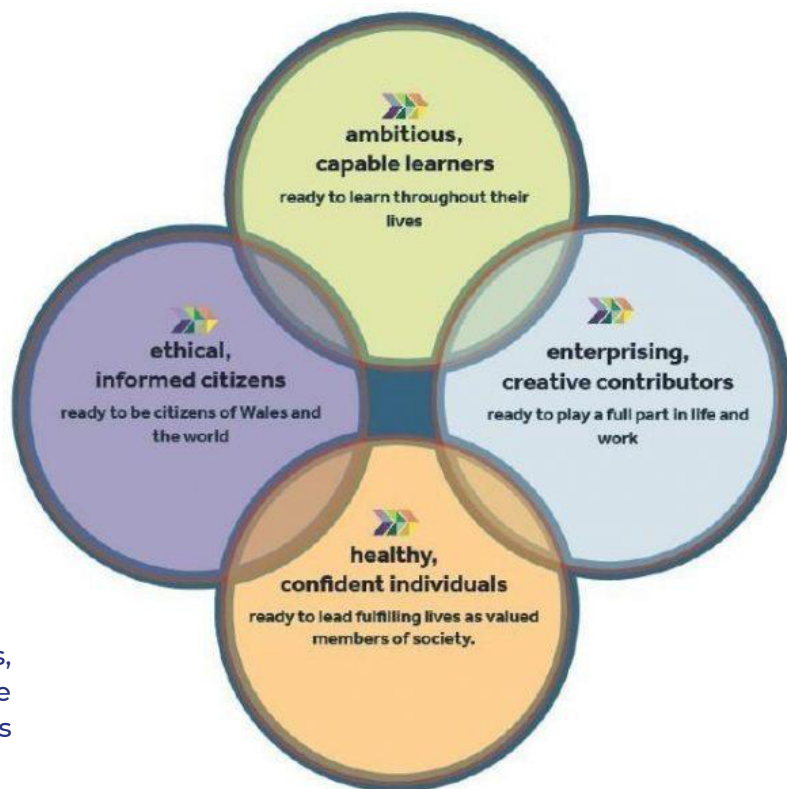


Newsletter focus item:

Curriculum

Curriculum consultation outcomes

In the summer term, we consulted with pupils, parents, governors and staff about the four purposes of the Welsh curriculum. These are:



For each of the four purposes, we asked which pupils, parents, governors and staff considered to be the most important to focus on with our pupils at this point in time. Responses were as follows:

	Pupils	Parents	Governors	Staff
Healthy, confident individuals	Building mental and emotional well-being	Form good relationships based on mutual respect and trust	Building mental and emotional well-being	Building mental and emotional well-being
Ethical, informed citizens	Understand their responsibilities and rights	Respect the rights and needs of others	Respect the rights and needs of others Consider the impact of their actions when making choices	Respect the rights and needs of others Consider the impact of their actions when making choices Understand their responsibilities and rights
Enterprising, creative contributors	Be a team player	Take part in opportunities	Think creatively to solve problems Share their ideas and emotions	Think creatively to solve problems Take measured risks and try new things
Ambitious, capable learners	Set themselves goals	Build up their knowledge and apply it	Build up their knowledge and apply it	Set themselves goals

Our curriculum planning encompasses all aspects of the four purposes however, we have agreed that we will seek greater opportunities to:

Healthy, confident individuals	Building mental and emotional well-being
Ethical, informed citizens	Understand their responsibilities and rights
Enterprising, creative contributors	Think creatively to solve problems
Ambitious, capable learners	Set themselves goals

The four purposes are part of our planning processes. We also consider pupils' needs and our Ysgol Nantgwyn pathway points which give a continuum of learning from nursery all the way through to and including year 11.

In nursery through to year 8, pupils progress through the pathway points in English, literacy and communication; mathematics and numeracy; humanities; expressive arts; languages; well-being; and, science and technology. Pupils consider some of their learning through themes in their Caru Dysgu (love learning) lessons. These are set out below:

N	Me	Community	Dens
R	Independence	Travel	Creatures
1	Universe	People	Environment
2	Team	World	Pirates
3	Culture	Disaster	Social influence
4	Disease	Discovery	Systems
5	World	Conflict	Explore
6	Identity	Change	Enterprise
7	Together	Catastrophe	British
8	Crime and punishment	Cynefin	Equality and diversity
9	Equality and diversity Enterprise and finance	Equality and diversity Enterprise and finance	Equality and diversity Enterprise and finance

In year 9, pupils' curriculum starts to look towards the subjects that they will look to take options in and therefore there are changes including humanities becoming separated into history, geography, health and social care, religion, values and ethics and sociology. STEM becomes the separate disciplines of biology, chemistry, physics, design technology and digital competence. Pupils also start to study enterprise and financial education.

In years 10 and 11, pupils work towards their qualifications however, for many subjects, they have been working progressively towards them every year since joining Ysgol Nantgwyn. Pupils study core (mandatory) subjects and then take options.


Our core curriculum for years 10 and 11 currently consists of qualifications in:

- English language
- English literature
- Mathematics
- Mathematics-numeracy
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physical
- Skills challenge certificate (Welsh Bacallaureate)
- Welsh
- Religion, values and ethics
- Enterprise
- Financial education
- Digital competence

Pupils can currently opt to take three further subjects from a choice of usually between 11 and 14. The number and the qualifications vary depending on the aspirations and chosen pathways of each year group.

Independent learning

We call our homework independent learning and it is our expectation that all pupils complete this in line with the deadline. Independent learning tasks support and strengthen the learning that has taken place in class and, on occasions, is essential for helping to understand future learning. For nursery through to year 8, there will be one task per curriculum area per half term. For years 9 to 11, there will be two tasks per curriculum area per half term. Pupils receive positive points for all tasks that they complete. Please could you encourage your child to complete these tasks - sheets are emailed to pupils and Parentmailed to parents at the same time so that you are aware of the expectations for your child.

 CLASS: MIDDLE SCHOOL (4-6) These independent learning tasks should be completed by 20/12/22. All completed tasks will be rewarded with positive points.			
Reading Pupils in years 4 to 6 follow the Reading Eggs programme and should be completing this 5 times a week for 20 minutes. Pupils will be set a weekly reading assignment by their class teacher to complete and should access the library area of the programme in addition to this. Please contact your child's teacher if you need a reminder of your child's login details.			
Mathematics and numeracy	English, literacy and communication	Science and technology	Caru dysgu: Humanities
Visit the "Topmarks" site. Consolidate your learning. Make a list of the games you played and give them to your teacher. You can explain the games to your teacher. Key Stage 2 - Topmarks Search	Choose a narrative story in the Reading Eggspress library to read making sure that the book is appropriate for you. Create a book review on the story to share with your peers.	Can you make a family tree of all the key members of your family? You can include, your brothers and sisters, mum and dad, aunts and uncles and grandparents. I have put some examples on our Science google classroom.	Research the work of Mary Seacole and the work she did to fight disease.
Caru dysgu: Expressive arts	Well-being	Languages: Welsh	Languages: Spanish
Make a percussion instrument that you can bring to school to play as part of our class orchestra. We will compose a percussion piece to represent parts of the novel.	Draw/make a healthy meal for the monster in our novel Frankenstein. Remember that the monster does not know about a balanced diet. It is your job to teach him.	Design an imaginative animal, it can have the head of a lion, the tail of a snake and the body of a pig. Use your imagination. Once you've drawn the animal, can you label it. I.e. Pen llew, cynffon neidr, corff mochyn.	Create a picture of your own animal park and label as many animals as you can in Spanish.

Nant library

Nant library will now be open after school on a Monday to Thursday for any year 7 to 11 pupils who wish to use the area to independently complete their independent learning or revision. Computers and printers are also available in this area for pupils.

The library will be open from 3:05pm to 4:10pm.

National reading and numeracy tests

Over the last half term pupils in year 2 to year 9 have been completing their procedural and reasoning National Numeracy Tests. National Reading tests will follow across the year from the end of November. We would encourage you to take some time with your child to review the feedback from these tests which you can access through their Hwb account.

> Log into Hwb

> Click Menu

> Click Personalised Assessments

> Click Learner Feedback

Here you will be able to view the feedback from the tests.

The feedback is a snapshot of your child's skills at the time the assessment was taken. It provides just one source of information on your child's overall knowledge and understanding. Your child's teacher will consider this feedback, alongside other information they have on your child's skills in Numeracy and reading work in the classroom, in order to plan their learning.

The first section of the report shows your child's progress in the personalised assessments. The assessments taken by your child are shown on the graph. Your child may have taken more than one assessment a year so the graph will either have one or two assessments shown for each school year. Using the information from their assessments, the graph shows where your child is in comparison to all other children in their year group across Wales. You will be able to see your child's progress from one year to the next.

The second section of the report gives your child's age-standardised score for their most recent assessment. This shows how your child has done compared with other children in Wales from a typical school year who were born in the same year and month.

The score range is 70–130 and the average is 100.



Behaviour - Nant building (years 7-11)

We have completed a variety of activities to gather views on how we work as a team to ensure that everyone demonstrates a positive approach to learning at all times. This has included talking to pupils, parents, staff and governors as well as looking at data and considering a range of approaches in other schools. As a result, we are making some changes to procedures in the Nant building which we hope will support and encourage pupils to concentrate on progressing their learning in all lessons and observing rules at break and lunchtimes.

We run a system in Nant building as follows:

Point	Behaviour	School actions	Communication
-1	Not following school rules	Warning is given Possible change of seats in class Short, positive conversation -1 recorded on ClassCharts	None
-2	Persistently not following school rules in the classroom	Pupil has a short amount of time out Pupil is supported by another member of staff to talk about the incident and how to find a solution so the pupil can regulate their behaviour	Parentmail sent to inform parents
-3	Serious incident OR Has had multiple -2s during the day	Pupil goes to reset Pupil is supported to consider their behaviour by another member of staff potentially through emotional support session/nurture session Pupil stays in reset for the remainder of the day Pupil completes same day after school detention Pupil has positive restorative discussion with classroom member of staff at a point during the day (possibly in detention) to resolve any issues with returning to that class	Parentmail sent to inform parents
-4	Not following rules in reset provision (after a period of de-escalation)	Pupil is put with a member of SLT to await parental meeting	Phonecall to request that parents attend the school for a meeting to discuss next steps.

In relation to mobile phones, after an initial warning, if a pupil continues to use their mobile phone it will be removed and stored securely until the end of the day. For pupils who access Penygraig at lunch time and use a payment system on their phone, they will not be given their phone back for lunch time, so alternative payment will be needed.

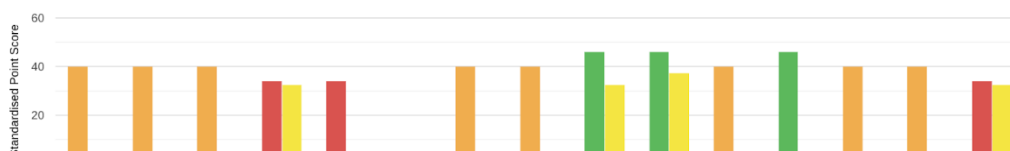
Where pupils continue to attain negative behaviour points, they enter into a monitoring system by key members of staff. This could include being on behaviour report for a period of time where staff will support to ensure the pupil has positive days. Where there are instances of truancy or maintained poor behaviour, pupils may be placed on a risk assessment where parental support is required.

Pupils who are in reset during the day will have a same day after school detention in the same area. This is to enable a restorative conversation to take place. Restorative conversations are a critical part of ensuring that pupils and staff move on from difficulties that have taken place in class. They enable important points of information to be shared and both the pupil and member of staff to share their perspective and agree about how to move forward in the next lessons. It ensures that when pupils arrive at the next lesson with that member of staff that the relationship between them is positive and purposeful from the off, with no layers of awkwardness or outstanding conversations. From 28th November, we will have a later minibuss running to take pupils home who live over a certain distance away and parents are unable to collect.

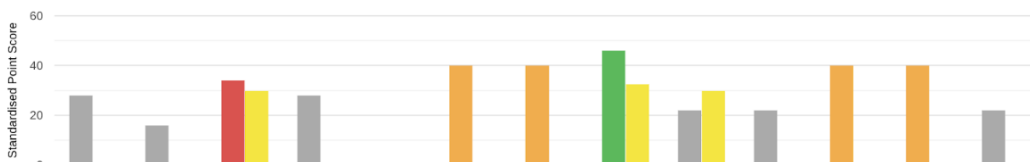
Attendance

The following graphs give an indication of what poor attendance can do to qualification grades based on attendance. The same is true for learning in all year groups. The less a pupil attends school, the harder they will have to work to get the same learning done. Equally, the less a pupil attends school, the more likely their learning and progress academically, socially and emotionally is to decrease.

Consider that this first graph shows the grades that you are predicted to get based on 95% attendance or more...



This is what those grades start to look like when you reduce to 93%..



This is what those grades start to look like when you reduce to 91%...



Our school attendance is currently often less than 90%. This means that a significant amount of pupils are missing out on a significant amount of their learning.

Currently, there are no restrictions on school attendance, there are no expectations for pupils to test for Covid and so all pupils should be in school every day unless they are seriously unwell. Previous guidance that was issued to schools prior to Covid is available here:

Should you have any queries about whether your child should or should not come to school, you can look to NHS Wales 111 for guidance.

We are also happy to discuss with you in the morning - you can reach us on 07926458084 from 07:15. Please keep trying if you don't get through straight away.

Dates for your diary

Our first 'Christingle, carols around the tree' event will be held on Monday 19th December from 5pm to 6pm in Gwyn yard (plan A) and Gwyn hall (plan B). This is an opportunity for us to come together as a school community. There will be a small male voice choir, a couple of small performances from pupils, a mince pie and a hot chocolate on entry and lyrics sheets so that we can all sing some Christmas favourites together...very Christmassy indeed!

To support families in celebrating what is the first normal Christmas in a few years, we have made the decision to make Friday 23rd December an INSET day however we do ask that you support us with our whole school attendance figures by ensuring that your child comes to school right up to and including Thursday 22nd December. There are lots of Christmas activities planned around the learning which will continue to the end of term.

Our PTA are also running a range of activities for you to take part in. Crucially, any funds raised go back into the school. Keep an eye on Facebook for upcoming events!

Lower school

Nursery experience day: Tuesday 6th December
Reception experience day: Tuesday 6th December
Year 1 experience trip: Tuesday 22nd November
Year 2 experience trip: Monday 28th November
Year 3 experience trip: Thursday 8th December
Lower School Christmas experience: Thursday 22nd December - afternoon.
Nursery Christmas concert: Wednesday 21st December @ 09:15
Reception Christmas concert: Tuesday 20th December @ 09:15
Year 1 Christmas concert: Thursday 22nd December @ 09:15
Year 2 Christmas concert: Thursday 22nd December @ 10:15
Year 3 Christmas concert: Thursday 22nd December @ 11:15
Father Christmas Visit: Thursday 22nd December
Lower School Christmas Disco: Tuesday 20th December @ 13:30 - 14:15
Whole School Christmas Dinner Day: Tuesday 20th December

Middle school

Christmas jumper week: Monday 19th December - Thursday 22nd December
Whole School Christmas Dinner Day: Tuesday 20th December
Gwyn Middle School Christmas Disco: Tuesday 20th December @ 14:15 - 15:00
Year 4 Christmas concert Wednesday 21st December @10:15 in Gwyn hall
Year 6 Christmas concert Wednesday 21st December @11:15 in Gwyn hall
Year 5 Christmas concert Wednesday 21st December @13:45 in Gwyn hall
Middle School Christmas experience: Thursday 22nd December - afternoon.
Father Christmas Visit: Thursday 22nd December

Upper school

Year 11 assessment week Week beginning 21st November
Year 11 boost week Week beginning 12th December and 19th December -
Christmas jumper week: Monday 19th December - Thursday 22nd December
Christingle service . Monday 19th December - More information to follow.
Whole School Christmas Dinner Day: Tuesday 20th December
Father Christmas Visit: Thursday 22nd December

Contact details

lowerschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk
middleschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk
upperschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk