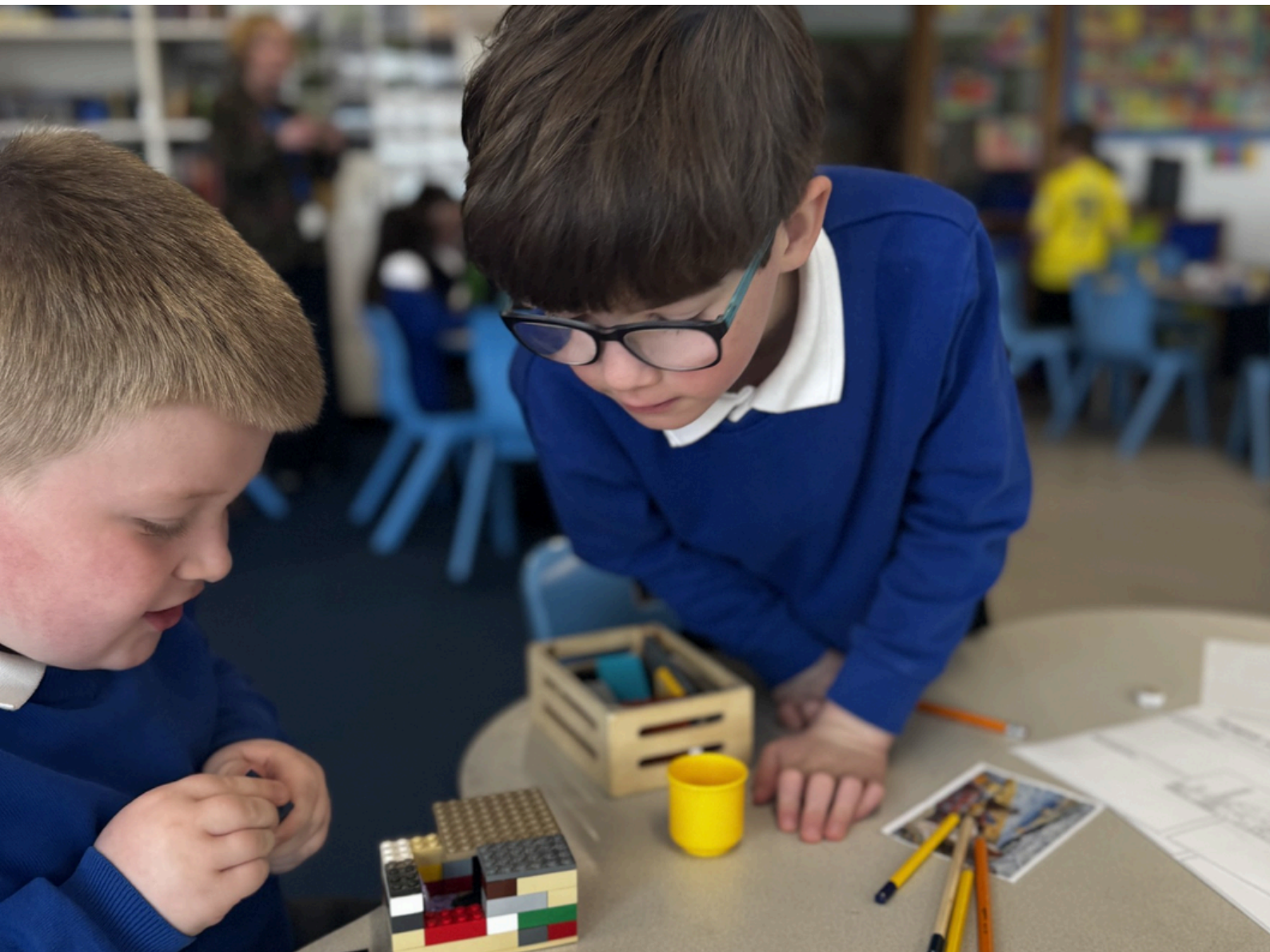


PARENT NEWSLETTER



April 2025



A NOTE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

I am always tempted to start the newsletter opening with something that says how positive and productive the month has been and April has been no exception as we seem to have 'hurtled' towards Easter at a pace and there has been so much going on! Some of the wonderful learning events this past month include:

- A mysterious door that came from nowhere and arrived in Gwyn yard
- Making writing come to life through filming digital stories in year 6
- Going to the local travel agents and working in our in school 'passport agency' in role play corner
- Lots of sporting fixtures including rugby, basketball and rugby with athletics events coming up
- Putting out 'fires' in nursery with hose pipes
- A week of GCSE art and photography examinations with amazing pieces of work produced
- Our 'big' trips done before Easter to keep the prices of coaches and entry down
- Disneyland Paris and Ski Andorra

We do try to take and share as many pictures as possible to celebrate our wonderful pupils and their learning however working with pupils and supporting their learning and progress always takes priority.

The implementation of the mobile phone ban has gone well and you will read later in the newsletter the positive impact that this is having, particularly on break and lunchtimes for pupils in Nant. It has been lovely to see our older pupils doing mindfulness colouring at lunchtimes, playing cards, Jenga, table tennis and with yoyos but most importantly talking and laughing together...really lovely to see. Thank you to all our parents for your support with this – our greatest successes come when all of #teamnantgwyn work together.

We had a productive parent forum meeting recently discussing the mobile phone policy implementation, rights respecting schools and attendance with valuable input from the parents that attended. Information about the parent forum can be found here and minutes will be uploaded to the website also. If any parents would like to join future discussions please do get in touch with us via admin@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk You are very welcome to attend.

Equally important are the voices of our pupils which are collected across the full school and represented by the pupil leadership team. Most recently the pupil leadership team met with me to share recommendations about pupils' learning, pupils' well-being and how we can work together to evaluate what we do as a learning organisation. Pupils have a set of recommendations and will now build this into their own action plan with an allocated budget. They will also track actions and make sure that they are having impact and provide an evaluation to governors on a regular basis. Having pupils' voices represented, listened to and acted upon is very important to me and we have set up as such to make sure that this happens. As an example, a group of year 7 and 8 girls recently came to see me to express an interest in setting up girls' rugby training and matched. Within a couple of weeks, we have organised training groups, times, venues and a coach - the smiles of the girls was and is a super thing to see as a reward to them using their voices to represent their views.

With warm wishes,

Ms Laura Morris
Headteacher

Mobile phone policy

As a school, we feel that we have a duty of care to create an environment that is calm, safe and free from distraction so that all pupils can learn and thrive. Statistically, by the age of 12, 97% of pupils own a mobile phone on a national basis.¹

Mobile phones played such a significant role in the lives of all pupils when we moved through the Covid-19 pandemic; we have taken our time to recognise this and supported pupils to re-engage with their learning. Over the last academic year, we have worked with pupils, parents, colleagues in other schools and wider stakeholders to develop a policy that allows pupils to engage with their school learning without the distraction, disruption and diversion from learning that phones so often bring.

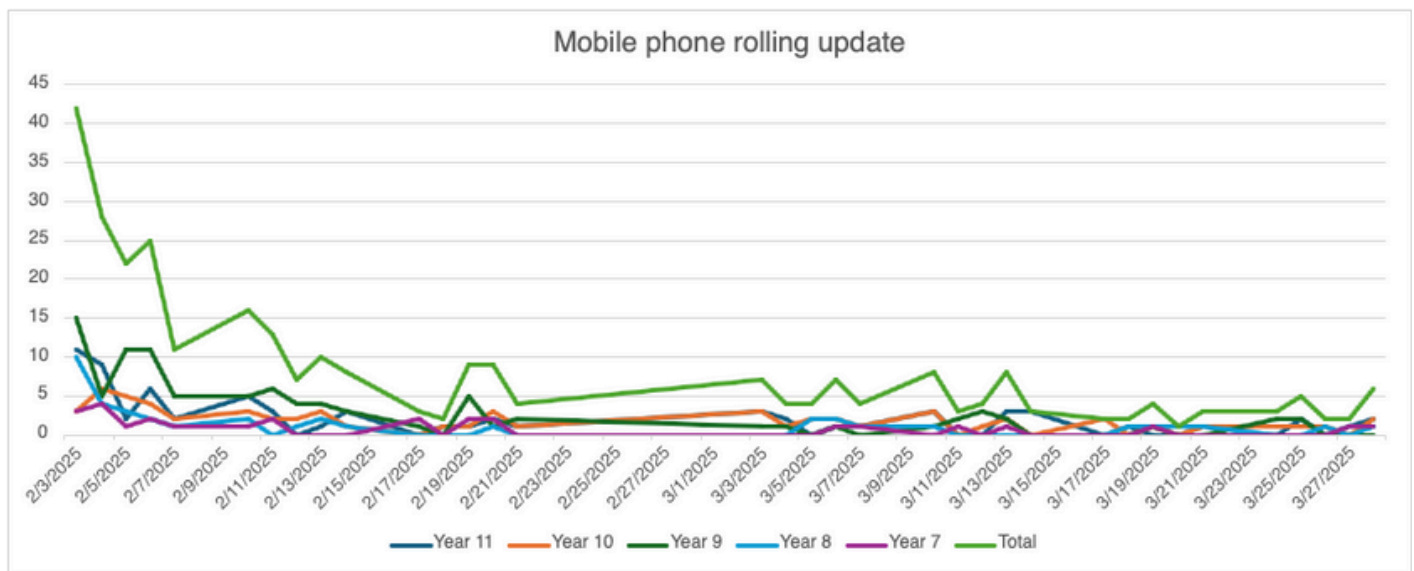
Key aims of the policy are to encourage engagement in lessons and to promote a positive culture of pupil relationships both inside the classroom and when pupils are engaging in recreational time. Although we experience limited instances of cyber bullying, on a national basis, one in five pupils have experienced cyber bullying online. We owe it to our pupils to create an environment where all children feel safe from the distractions of mobile notifications as well as the risks and dangers associated with social media, cyber bullying and peer pressure.

In February of this term, we introduced the new policy which banned the use of mobile phones throughout the school day including at breaktime and lunchtime. The implementation included pupil voice activities and also a fortnight of ‘soft launch’ where pupils experienced assemblies and guidance on how the policy would be implemented on a daily basis.

Although we are not in a position to analyse the holistic impact of the policy as we are still in the early phases of implementation, the impacts on a day to day basis are tangible. Pupils are engaging with each other during break and lunchtime in ways that encourage friendship and enjoyment. During these times, instead of sitting indoors in groups on their phones, pupils are engaging with one another, playing ball games and enjoying spending time socialising outdoors. Pupil participation in activities including football, rugby, dodgeball, basketball and board games has increased significantly. Although some found it difficult to abide by the rules of the policy by not checking their phones, the feedback from pupils has been very positive.

As you can see from the data table below, the impact of the policy has been significant in terms of the average number of phones being removed on a day to day basis.

Week of implementation	Daily average across week
Week 1	25.6 mobile phones removed
Week 2	10.8 mobile phones removed
Week 3	5.4 mobile phones removed
Week 4	5.2 mobile phones removed
Week 5	5.2 mobile phones removed
Week 6	2.4 mobile phones removed
Week 7	3.6 mobile phones removed



The graph above outlines the year group breakdown as well as the total number of mobile phones removed. The number of daily removals has decreased significantly so that we have single figure removals on a day-to-day basis. We are moving through the policy collectively, as a staffing and pupil body working as #teamNantgwyn.

Feedback is essential, we regularly meet with pupils, parents and staff to review the progress of policies. We recently met with our parents forum where the policy has been shared. In our most recent pupil voice activity, some of the perspectives of pupils are shared below when they have been asked about their thoughts on the mobile phone policy and its impact on their learning.

Even before the new rules we were not really allowed to go on our phones, I would still try in lessons. This made me always think about going on my phone but now I don't bother because I know I am not going to get away with it. I am in year 10 and I know I need to knuckle down on my learning.

Kenzie R Y10

I have had less negatives since the mobile phone policy started. I feel like I am concentrating more in lessons as I am getting better at work. I am getting more positive points because of the work I am doing in class.

Jazmine E Y8

I have been doing more work in lessons, this is because I have not been tempted to look at my phone to play on it. I am playing more football at break and lunchtime because we all get together on the 3G.

Rowan E Y8

A true 'barometer' of the current success is to speak to your child about the positive or negative impacts to date. Please share any feedback with us by using the help@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk email. We will continue to implement the policy with consistency and would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support.

Pupil reflections

Our pupils have been keen to share their voice regarding the mobile phone ban and it has highlighted the successes of this new policy across the school. From completing this recent pupil voice activity, pupils have acknowledged that this policy has had a positive impact on pupils across the school. For example, some pupils have stated that not having their mobile phones has improved their attention span in lessons and something really lovely as a piece of feedback is that friendship groups have become closer because they are spending more time during break and lunch talking to each other rather than on their phones. Pupils have also stated that they feel their progress will be higher in lessons because they are becoming more independent when completing tasks as they are asking for peer-to-peer support or teacher support instead of looking for an answer on their mobile phones if they are unsure of something. This has helped develop their social skills and improve their independence. Below are some examples of this feedback as part of our form time lessons:

Wednesday 5th February.

We are now half way through the ban. I have realised I have got 0 negatives since 1st week. My ~~to~~ I have been doing way more work and have been listening more.

5/02/25
makes me happier to talk to my friends more because I'm not on my phone.

Wednesday 5th February
My school is now half way through the ^{first} week of the new phone policy. I've learnt a lot this week because I have not been on my phone at all this week in school and I'm thankful that they banned phones because I feel free.

Monday 3rd February

Today a new mobile phone policy was introduced in my school, Ysgol Nantgwyn. The policy is 'out of sight is alright, on display taken away'. AS I entered the school gates on the first day I felt very lost without my phone and quite bored on break and dinner.

Tuesday 4th February

Today was better than yesterday because I was kind of getting used to the phone ban but I was really bored during dinner time, ^{but} I think it's better for me not to have my phone during the school day. → explain why.

Wednesday 5th February

My school is now half way through the first week of the new phone policy. I've learnt quite a bit this week. ^{such as?} I miss my phone so much during the school day, but my screen time is getting alot better.

Gwaith Dosbarth Dydd mercher, 5th, Chwefror.
Form time, lesson.

1. Diary of the wimpy kid.
2. Diary.
3. Dear Diary, writing in first person, the day/date they were writing in the diary.

interested. Monday 3rd February.
joyful
free
successful
creative.

Today a new mobile phone policy was introduced in my school, Ysgol Nantgwyn. The policy is 'out of sight is alright, on display taken away'. AS I entered the school gates on the first day I felt... there was no difference for me really because I don't really go on my phone in school but I still take my phone to school for an example if I am on the second bus coming home I will tell my mother. but at dinner and break all my friends are talking way more than usefully. So I do think the school made a good choice.

Pupil leadership team update

Our pupil leadership team have been working extremely hard since our last update. We have attended Governors' meetings where we have presented our ideas and feedback to staff and key stakeholders. We have also looked at learning in lessons through a learning review where we had the opportunity to look at books from a range of different subjects. Based on this, we have had the opportunity to provide feedback on what we discovered in the books we looked at. On a bigger scale, we have started our first round of pupil voice using our form representatives from across all areas of the school. During this round, our pupil leadership team have collected valuable feedback from pupils about their thoughts and feelings regarding learning, teaching and wellbeing. Here, pupils have had the opportunity to evaluate the strengths and areas of development within these three elements. Some of our positive feedback has included:

- Pupils enjoying the different strategies that are used within the different lessons/faculties
- Pupils highlighting that feedback is effective and can be used to aid progression in learning
- The activities break and lunchtime activities on offer are enriching
- Within lessons, there are a variety of interesting and engaging topics that are underpinned by a high standard of teaching
- The mobile phone ban has been popular and effective

When looking at areas to develop, our pupils have explored a range of different options for us. Some of these things include discussions around lunchtime being shorter and a re-vamp of our rewards system so that pupils have bigger incentives to be successful in school. The pupil leadership team have been exploring the use of an on-site ice cream van as a possible reward, along with more school trip opportunities and other things such as pizza lunches or early passes for dinnertime. All of these ideas are currently being collated together for the pupil leadership team to finalise their action plan and then share with pupils.

Alongside using pupil voice from across the school to develop new ideas, our pupil leadership team have also been working hard on their own ideas within their three areas of learning, learning organisation and wellbeing. Arianwen and Bronwen, as part of learning, have been researching new and innovative strategies that teachers can use to vary their teaching methods. For wellbeing, Callum, Laylah and Abigail have been focused on the development of a tuck shop that pupils can access at break times for fresh fruit. Finally, we have Benjamin and Deionne as part of learning organisation who are currently in the middle of planning a 'Showcase of Work' event for parents and pupils to attend as a way of showing off all the excellent work that we are producing across all areas of the school. This is definitely an event that you need to keep your eyes peeled for! We are looking to run this in the next half term, and we will advertise all key information for this via Class Charts and our Facebook page.

Year 11 Prom 2025

Our pupil leadership team has developed a 'prom wardrobe' over the past couple of years where by year 11 pupils are able to take items and wear them to the prom evening. We are very grateful to be able to make this available for pupils by kind donations from our local community and others linked with the school.

Our pupils wear lots of different outfits to our prom. We have tuxedos, suits, trousers and waistcoats, trousers and shirts with and without ties, lots of different types of dresses, jumpsuits and suits as well as formal shoes.

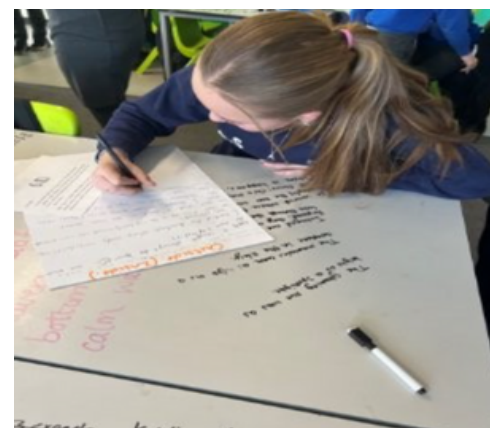
If you have any unwanted clothing that could benefit another person on their prom day, bring it to the reception of Ysgol Nantgwyn, Tonypany, Monday to Friday between 8am and 4pm.



Gwyn: 'Wednesday of Wonder'

We had a very exciting week in Gwyn, at the end of last term. I'm sure you may have seen or heard that we had an unexpected object arrive in our school on Tuesday. A new mysterious door appeared in the lower school yard and all pupils had the opportunity to look at and explore it. We were all confused about where the door had come from and even more confused when we arrived at school on Wednesday to see it had moved.

On Wednesday, we then held Gwyn's 'Wednesday of Wonder' where pupils across Gwyn mixed classes to focus on a writing skill before planning a writing a story linked to the door. Gwyn pupils all worked on their individual targets across the day, to improve their writing. Pupils demonstrated amazing creativity and imaginative ideas throughout the day.



Expressive arts performance:

Year 9 had the wonderful opportunity of watching a performance of the NSPCC UK tour of the play 'It's Not Love' focussing on issues surrounding healthy relationships. Several pupils were involved in a script development workshop for this project, as one of only four Welsh schools chosen; it was fantastic for pupils to hear their words and suggestions on stage.



Year 6 Senedd visit

This month year 6 had a visit from a member of the Senedd. They found out about how changes are made in Wales and even took part in their own debates. Pupils also shared their ideas for change and received some excellent tips and advice that they can put into action!



Check your child's eligibility to get up to **£200 for School Essentials** and **extra funding for your school.**



School Essentials grant

The School Essentials Grant may be available to help with uniform, sports kit and equipment.
Visit: <https://orlo.uk/jqxj3>