

PARENT NEWSLETTER



May 2025



A NOTE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

We learn continuously through our lives and our role, as a school, in helping pupils to learn how to learn is really important. If we think about some of the things that we have had to learn how to do as a 'grown up' like DIY, fixing something, how to remove stains, the best way to drive to a particular place at a particular time of day – all of these we have had to learn using the same skills that we used to learn to write an extended piece of work, what words mean, how to do a 'tuck' on the trampoline, how to shade with different techniques to make different textures and densities...the list goes on. In school, as in life, we learn using similar methods. We look to others for explanations, help and support whether that person is standing next to us, in front of us, at the end of the phone or online. We Google it. We watch a demonstration on YouTube. We look at AI.

We attend a workshop event. We listen, we try, we try again and again, and we keep going until we have put up that shelf, filled the gap between the skirting boards and wall, sewn a button on, got the grass stains out of tracksuit knees! And, at some point, we are good at it!

Our teachers work with pupils of all ages, as do you, for them to develop their independent learning skills to be able to 'do it themselves' by learning how to. This goes from doing up a zip, tying a shoelace right through to answering examination questions at ages 15 and 16.

The feature in this edition of the newsletter is developing pupils' learning skills and I hope you enjoy reading about what pupils are learning to do and how they can further support themselves and their learning skills.

With warm wishes,

Ms Laura Morris
Headteacher



Newsletter focus: study skills

Lower school

Helping with reading at home for children in lower School.

Learning to read is one of the most important skills your child will develop and supporting your child at home with their reading can be incredibly impactful.

The first stage of developing the skills needed for reading is to build language skills and foster a love of books. At home it is vital that you read aloud daily to your child using expression and enthusiasm. Make reading a routine, for example, before bed or after school. Talk about the book and ask questions like, 'what can you see?' or 'what do you think will happen next?', 'which part of the story did you like the most?' This helps build language development and helps develop vocabulary. Sing songs and nursery rhymes to your child to build up sound awareness and identify rhyming patterns. Point out letters in signs, food packages and names but use the phonetic sound of the letter rather than the name of the letter. This builds up phonetic awareness. Encourage your child to tell the story, let them make up the story by looking at the pictures. Let them 'read' the pictures and retell the stories. As your child's reading skills develop, have your child to read aloud to you daily and always be supportive and encouraging, play snap games with tricky words. Try echo reading, you read a sentence and have your child repeat it or try shared reading, you read a sentence, and your child reads the next sentence. As your child becomes a more independent reader, encourage them to read a wide range of books, both fiction and non-fiction, and allow them to choose their own reading material. This enables them to choose books which interest them and strengthens their enjoyment and love of reading. Model reading, let your child see you reading regularly as this shows them that you also value reading.

Above all be patient and positive around reading, and enjoy this is a lovely quote:

'Children are made readers on the laps of their parents'.



Middle school

At Ysgol Nantgwyn we are committed to developing fluent and confident readers. To support this at home, we recommend that you should encourage your child to read for at least twenty minutes a day, five times a week. This practice not only enhances their literacy skills but also fosters a lifelong love for reading. Varied reading materials, including fiction, non-fiction, magazines, or even comics, can significantly enrich their experience. Encourage them to choose anything that sparks their interest and discuss these choices with them. Establish a routine that makes reading a regular and enjoyable part of their day. Consider reading together, as this can strengthen their understanding and fluency. Engaging in conversations about the stories can also enhance comprehension skills.

Additionally, providing a quiet, comfortable space for reading, free from distractions, will further encourage your child to immerse themselves in their chosen texts. Your involvement and enthusiasm in their reading habits will contribute to their academic success and enjoyment of literature.

To help support reading and provide a range of materials to read at home, pupils in years 4 to 6 have access to Reading Eggs. Reading Eggs is an online reading programme packed with hundreds of interactive reading activities, online children's books and literacy games. Reading Eggs makes reading real books, improving spelling skills and building reading comprehension highly engaging. Pupils are set regular assignments through Reading Eggs that they should complete at home, once these are complete, pupils can work through their own map of activities set to individual abilities.



Upper school

With the examination period upon us for years 10 and 11, and assessments ongoing for year 9, we thought it would be prudent to share some study skills information and tips on how to support your children at home with revision and preparation.

Parental engagement is key in helping your child to achieve. The good news is that you don't need to be an expert in every subject to be able to help. You really can make a difference, but it starts with a productive conversation. Work with your child to (calmly!) discuss the following;

- Agree a work/social life balance for your son/daughter and stick to it.
- All pupils at some point will feel demotivated, underwhelmed and struggle. At this time, your support and positivity are key.
- Teenagers often take an all or nothing approach to difficult situations, this is where you helping them to see the difficulties in perspective will help them get through the difficult times.

Once you have had productive conversations, you can then support them with their revision. You can try some of the following;

Ask your child to:

- Repeat key facts
- Review past papers with mark schemes
- Check their equipment prior to leaving the house when they have assessments/examinations
- Check their assessment/examination timetable to ensure a timely focus on a range of subjects
- Check for revision sessions based in school. A timetable has been released and is available.
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Where to start?

Pupils often tell us that they want to revise, but aren't sure how, or where to begin. Well, all you need is a good old-fashioned timetable! This can take any format; it can be a paper timetable, it can be an online version (there are lots of great websites that allow you to create and download one for free!), whatever you decide, just make sure it works for you and, when you have finished it, make sure you use it and place it somewhere visible.

Don't shove it in a drawer and forget about it. Here are some top tips for putting together your revision timetable:

1. Get all the information you need – exam dates, lesson timetable, social or sporting activities you have planned and work around these. Make sure you prioritise the subjects and topics you have earlier exams/assessments in. Also, make sure you allocate more time to the topics or subjects you struggle with – don't avoid them!
2. Be – realistic – block out the times you can't/or know you won't study. Do you work best in the morning or the evening? When are you most productive – create your timetable to suit your optimal working time.
3. Make sure you allocate breaks. This is vitally important. Nobody can 'cram' for 12 hours! You need to chunk your study time and allocate breaks.
4. Pick a start date – pin down a date to start and stick to it. Think about your revision priorities.
5. Plot your sessions – decide how much time you need on each topic and don't forget your breaks!
6. Display your timetable. It is no good if you can't see it. Print it out and stick it on your wall.

The learning environment

The environment plays a key part in ensuring that the revision is productive. Make their learning environment productive by ensuring they;

- have their books and resources in one place and in an organised manner. Make sure that they know where to find their notes for different subjects.
- having equipment; pens, pencils, rulers, calculator etc. organised and easily accessible.
- keeping the area neat and tidy at all times.



Remember - the space doesn't have to be perfect, it doesn't have to be pretty, it just needs to be organised and work for them!



Websites for past papers:

www.wjec.co.uk WJEC
www.edexcel.org.uk Edexcel
www.ocr.org.uk OCR

General Revision sites:
www.bbc.co.uk/education (bitesize)

General support for teens:
www.childline.org.uk

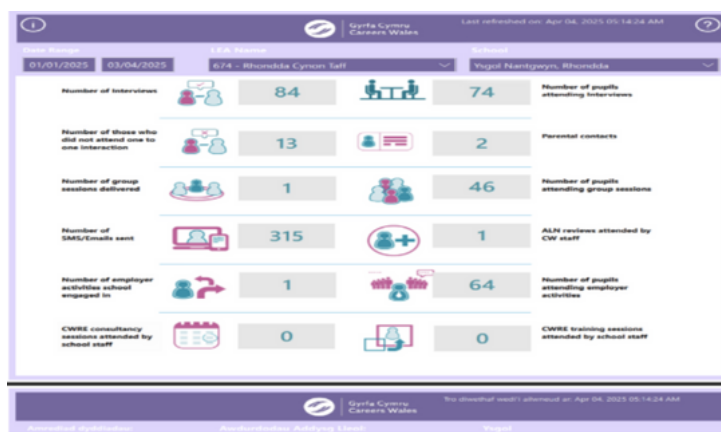
General support for parents:
www.parentlineplus.org.uk

10 Top tips to share with your child;

1. Whatever works for you - not everyone works/learns the same. Find out what your learning style is and capitalise on your strengths.
2. Eat well – your body needs fuel. Junk food such as crisps, energy drinks, chocolate etc. Will give you a rush of energy, but you will soon crash back down. This is not productive. You should eat sensibly and healthily. Brain food are oily fish, eggs, leafy greens, peanut butter, green tea, fresh fruit. Above all, stay hydrated. Plenty of water!
3. Exercise is key. When you are tired, you may not feel like exercising, but it will help with your revision. When taking a rest break, try and go for a brisk, 10-minute walk. It really can help with brain activity. Physical activity and exercise releases endorphins – they give you energy, help you to sleep better and improve your mental health and wellbeing.
4. Stay positive – a positive mental attitude is key. You CAN do this. You've got this.
5. Get enough Sleep – this is key. Your brain will not function properly if you are tired.
6. Take breaks. Breaks are just as important as the revision sessions. If you need a break, take one and come back to it.
7. Set Goals – daily, weekly etc. Make sure they are doable, achievable, small steps.
8. Find the best study time for you – morning, afternoon, evening.
9. Exams and assessments can be good. They are an opportunity for you to show what you can do.
10. Sleep on it.

Careers

As you will be aware, we work closely with Careers Wales to provide support for your child when they have to make important decisions about subjects, courses, careers, training, jobs and more. They offer a range of services to our young people and work in a variety of ways. Please see the infographic below demonstrating the number of contacts for the previous term.



Our focus areas going forward are to complete the final tranche of year 10 and 11 one to one interviews. This ensures that all pupils in year 11 will have had individual, face-to-face contact with a careers advisor before they leave for their chosen post-16 pathway.

We are also looking to include some further group sessions in years 9 and 10 during the final term. This will take the form of information and support sessions for year 9 during their option choice process and year 10 will complete their career check – an online survey that will give an early indication of their possible interests in relation to post 16 pathways.

Should you need any further support or information, the Careers Wales website has a whole host of information and interactive activities. Please do take the time to have a look with your child. There is a section for parents that is incredibly useful also. The website is linked here for ease of reference; <https://careerswales.gov.wales/>



Gyrfa Cymru
Careers Wales

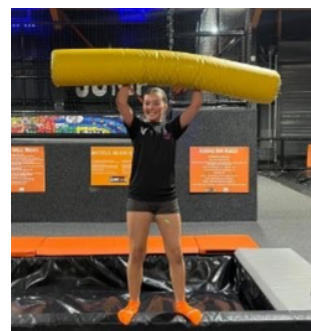
Ysgol Nantgwyn Ski trip 2025

Over the Easter holidays, many pupils across the school travelled to Andorra with Mr Hinton, Miss Morse and Mrs Holmes for the Ysgol Nantgwyn ski trip. They had the most amazing time visiting Grandvalira experiencing the snowy slopes. A whole week of travelling, skiing, spending quality time with friends, building relationships and creating unforgettable memories.



Reward trips

Before Easter, Ysgol Nantgwyn pupils had a fantastic time on their yearly reward trips. Years 4-6 attended Jump Jam and the cinema to watch the Minecraft movie and 7 and 8 went to Alton Towers. A great time was had by all!



Years 2 and 3 had a wonderful time at Margam Park, Playing in the park, looking at the baby animals and visiting Fairytale land. Well done to all the pupils who went on the trip as they all represented Ysgol Nantgwyn wonderfully!



Pupil leadership update

Since our last update for the pupil leadership team, they have been working tirelessly on ensuring that their ideas are becoming actions and that their presence and impact around the school is felt. Arianwen and Bronwen have moved their research of teaching strategies and have looked at ones that can be embedded into teachers' lessons. This was based on a pupil voice activity about their feelings towards lessons and how we can continue to drive and push standards as a team. They have also gathered some feedback from staff about lessons and have found out that staff in Ysgol Nantgwyn love a visualiser! Below is a document that Arianwen and Bronwen created to share with staff as part of their role within the PLT.

Learning Strategies for the Classroom

10 Digital Assessment Tools

- Quizlet
- Edpuzzle
- socrative
- Mentimeter
- Flipgrid
- Blooket
- SENECA
- Just Press Record
- Padlet
- Plickers

YouTube Channels

- Maths Channels**
 - Mathonics
 - CorbettMaths
 - Mathologer
 - The GCSE Maths Tutor
 - Hegarty Maths
- English Channels**
 - Mr Bruff
 - MrSalterTeachesEnglish
 - MrEverythingEnglish
 - Bengo Teach
- Coding Channels**
 - Treehouse
 - freeCodeCamp.org
 - LearnCode.academy
 - Codecademy
 - ProgrammingKnowledge
- Science Channels**
 - Minute Physics
 - TED-Ed
 - My GCSE Science
 - DrPhysicsA
 - Princessa Kitchen Academy

10 Scaffolding Strategies

1. Pre-teaching vocabulary
2. I do, We do, You do
3. Guided note taking
4. Sentence stems
5. TAPPLE (teach, ask, pair, pick, listen and effective feedback)
6. Live modelling using a visualiser
7. Chunking tasks into smaller steps
8. Thinking aloud
9. Group work
10. Manipulatives

The Pupil Leadership Team



When looking at the wellbeing strand, Laylah, Abigail and Callum have expanded on their idea of a fruit tuck shop and also moved into selling tip tops to raise money for the team. This has gone down extremely well with our pupils and for something that was meant to be once or twice a week, you can always find the tip top stall being run by PLT or the form representatives every break and lunchtime! What started out as a free tasting session has become a popular stall where we raised over £20 for PLT and over £20 for the Pantry!



To push further now, Laylah, Abigail and Callum are evaluating the provision in and around our school to look at any opportunities where they can develop wellbeing.

Deionne and Benjamin, who have been working closely with learning organisation, are currently finalising their ideas for our showcase event. They have decided that this will be a video montage from across all areas of the school linked to pupil pride and self-esteem. Keep your eyes peeled for this on social media!

As a team, PLT have also been involved in the voting process for our current year 10 pupils. We have delivered an assembly to year 10 about what it means to be part of the pupil leadership team, and we are currently looking at our potential candidates for next year. These pupils will work alongside our PLT for the rest of this year to ensure a smooth transition as they hand over their torch.

Finally, our PLT team are in the middle of prom planning which is very exciting news! They have reviewed and refined the pupil and teacher awards and are currently creating their playlist and seating plans.

Overall, a very busy but very productive few weeks for our PLT!