

MAJOR NEWS / NEWYDDION MAWR

SPRING TERM / TYMOR Y GWANWYN	
Start / Dechrau:	Monday 8 January 2024 / Dydd Llun Ionawr 8 2024
Half Term / Hanner Tymor:	Monday 12 February 2024 – Friday 16 February 2024 / Dydd Llun Chwefror 12 – Dydd Llun Chwefror 16 2024
End / Diwedd:	Friday 22 March 2024 / Dydd Gwener Mawrth 22 2024
Week Beginning – Monday 11 March 2024 / Dydd Llun Mawrth 11 2024	Week 24/ Wythnos 24

Message from the Headteacher

Welcome to this week's edition of Major News. As you will see from items further on in the newsletter, it has been a busy week here, particularly in terms of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. These opportunities are so important in terms of building confident, resilient learners and I am most grateful to the staff who have given up their time to organise these activities.

I hope you have had time to read the communication sent yesterday outlining our new approach to mobile phones. From Monday, mobile phones may not be used at breaktime or lunchtime and must stay switched off in bags for the whole school day. Our reasons for reaching this decision were outlined in the letter you received yesterday, but, in short, schools are safe spaces for pupils to learn and all the research confirms that mobile phone use, at any time during the school day, detracts from that. A few parents have asked why, as a school in Wales, we should follow England's lead. Most Welsh schools also adopt this approach, including nearly every secondary school in the Vale. I have confirmed this is the case this week. It would be much appreciated if you could reiterate the expectations from Monday regarding mobile phone use over the weekend. If pupils fail to comply, phones will be confiscated and, if they are not handed over to be securely stored in the safe until the end of the day, then pupils will be issued with negative points and detention the following lunchtime. This will happen every time a pupil uses their phones and fails to hand it over. Thank you to all parents that have emailed in thanking us for doing this and supporting the approach. Your kind words are much appreciated.

As ever, many thanks for your continued support and I wish you a relaxing weekend.

Mrs C L Robins

Message from the Deputy Headteacher

We all recognise how important good attendance is for children to achieve their potential. This week I have been taking small assemblies with students to discuss how we will support them to improve their attendance moving forward.

The following table shows the expected attendance so far this year (111 days). It illustrates how many days of education have been lost so far this year if attendance is at an 80%, 85% or 90% capacity.



We will be putting the following measures in place to encourage and support learners to maintain high levels of attendance:

- +5 points for 100% attendance in the previous week;
- close monitoring to recognise improvement;
- form tutors regularly talking about the importance of good attendance; and
- liaising with parents/carers when we have concerns to discuss how we can improve children's attendance.

Mrs EJ Wilson

School Calendar

Week Beginning – Monday 11 March 2024 / <i>Dydd Llun Mawrth 11 2024</i>	Week 24/ <i>Wythnos 24</i>
Monday 11 March / <i>Dydd Llun Mawrth 11</i>	
Tuesday 12 March / <i>Dydd Mawrth Mawrth 12</i>	
Wednesday 13 March / <i>Dydd Mercher Mawrth 13</i>	RS Trip: Year 7 – Senedd
Thursday 14 March / <i>Dydd Iau Mawrth 14</i>	RS Trip: Year 7 – Senedd
Friday 15 March / <i>Dydd Gwener Mawrth 15</i>	
	Coming Up/ <i>I ddod</i>
Monday 18 March / <i>Dydd Llun Mawrth 18</i>	
Tuesday 19 March / <i>Dydd Mawrth Mawrth 19</i>	Parent Forum
Wednesday 20 March / <i>Dydd Mercher Mawrth 20</i>	
Thursday 21 March / <i>Dydd Iau Mawrth 21</i>	Year 10 Parents' Evening
Friday 22 March / <i>Dydd Gwener Mawrth 22</i>	

Music & Performing Arts Department

The Cast and Crew of Les Misérables 2023 are over the moon with 6 Awards last weekend at the Glammies and 12 nominations. Competing against other amateur theatre companies in the district, the school took the top prize of the night for Best Overall Musical, which means across every category they received the most points.

Leader of Learning, Miss Toms said “We are so privileged to work with such a talented and hard-working group of youngsters at Llantwit Major School, and it is fantastic to have the efforts of the students and staff recognised by the Glamorgan Drama League”.

Winner Best Supporting Actor - Sammi Morgan as Monsieur Thénardier (there were 14 people in this category)

Winner Best Actress - Connie Roots as Éponine

Winner Best Supporting Actress Under 14 - Cara Moulder as Gavroche

Winner Best Supporting Actor Under 14 - Oscar Cook as Gavroche

Best Musical Direction - Melita Davis

Best Overall Musical – Llantwit Major School



Urdd Eisteddfod

Our vocal duets take to the stage!

Our talented vocal duettists recently participated in the local Urdd Eisteddfod held at Memo Arts Centre in Barry on Thursday. Whilst they didn't go further in the competition this time, their performance was a testament to their dedication and hard work.

Niamh Moore / Imogen Kaye and Isabelle Mullett / Daisy Williams poured their hearts into preparing Mendelssohn's Gruss (Cofion in Welsh) for the competition. They spent countless hours rehearsing, refining their harmonies, and honing their stage presence. Their passion for music and commitment to each other were evident on stage.

Thank you to Miss Stacey, Mrs Williams and Miss Jefferies who gave their time to listen to and give guidance over the Welsh language elements.

While the judges ultimately chose other entries for the next round, our vocal duets delivered a captivating performance that resonated with the audience. Their flawless execution of challenging harmonies gathered enthusiastic applause. They learned so much from this experience and are definitely motivated to keep growing as musicians and Welsh learners.

We are incredibly proud of the girls' performances and their commitment to musical excellence. Let's give them a big round of applause as they continue to develop their talents and share their love for music and Welsh with the school community.



Modern Foreign Languages Department

Mentoring with Cardiff University

After delivering Linking Languages workshops to Year 8 French classes in the Autumn Term, Cardiff University MFL Mentor, Csenge, returned this term to work with two smaller groups of Year 8 students to look further at the importance of language learning in today's world. Csenge is from Hungary and in her final year of a French and Japanese degree at Cardiff University.

Over the course of 4 workshops, the students looked at links and differences between various countries' languages and cultures, and how they form part of our identities. They explored various linguistic and cultural aspects such as accents and dialects, myths, food, animals and translation. The students enjoyed all their sessions and found that it fed their curiosity and enthusiasm to explore the world and other cultures and languages further.

This is the second year of us taking part in the MFL Mentoring Scheme. The scheme has yet again been a success and we hope to continue to work with Cardiff University to promote language learning and enlighten our students to the opportunities that languages can give them.



Religious Studies Department

Senedd Trip

The 3rd and 4th year 7 visits to the Senedd took place this week. We are pleased to report that 96% of all year 7 students attended the visit and staff report that pupils engaged with the activities excellently.

On Wednesday, as well as having a tour of the Senedd and taking part in a debate about whether or not mobile phones should be banned in schools in Wales, pupils had the opportunity to sit in the gallery as a Housing committee meeting was taking place. It was an awesome experience to watch live debates in action as they were discussing important issues.

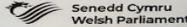
Mrs Williams would like to thank all those involved.



Debate time
Technology doesn't have a negative effect on children and young adults

- **8 in 10** people in Wales use social media
- Children aged seven to sixteen spend nearly **4 hours a day** online
- Although most social media platforms set their minimum user age at 13, more than two in five 8 to 11 year-olds used social media apps in 2020
- In 2020, half of children **owned their own phone by the age of ten**, and ownership was nearly universal by the age of 13 (95%)

- **YouTube** was the app that seven to 17 year-olds were most likely to name as their favourite in early 2021, but **TikTok** was the most popular platform for girls aged 13 to 17.
- **70%** of those who viewed videos online had seen something potentially harmful in the past three months. **Fake news** and **offensive language** were the most common.
- Five in ten 12 to 15 year-olds who used social media, chat and messaging apps, said they **felt pressure to be popular**, with many using filters to edit pictures they post.
- In 2022 more than 120,000 young people in years 7 to 11 of secondary schools across Wales took part in the Student Health and Wellbeing Survey. Better wellbeing was found to be associated with those who spent time online speaking to friends they already knew offline.
- The global audience for **Google Classroom** grew to 150 million students and teachers in February 2021, up from 60 million the previous year.
- AI images of Pope Francis in a puffer jacket fooled the internet in 2023 and went viral, including an image of Donald Trump being arrested and President Joe Biden with a mullet.

 Senedd Cymru
Welsh Parliament senedd.wales

Krakov Trip

In February, the RS department took 43 students from across years 10-13 to Krakow in Poland where we had a jam packed 4 days. Here are some reflections and highlights from pupils:

I found Auschwitz to be an interesting place and a sombre and haunting reminder of the past. Being in a place where events you only hear and learn about actually happen made them seem so much more devastating. It was an immersive experience that will live with me forever. Our tour guide was very knowledgeable and was able to describe what we were seeing, making it more haunting given the context of the places we were seeing. The most sombre moment was seeing the hair of the victims which was truly horrific and made everything so much more real. Entering the gas chamber also was a solemn moment because it was the site of many people's final moments. I feel like I further understand events that we only learn about from the experience.

The Polish folk evening was one of the most fun events of the trip. I enjoyed experiencing the culture and traditions of the country we were visiting. I felt it gave me a deeper connection to the place and the experience gave me lasting memories. I found it a highlighting experience to dance with everyone in a way we would not do in our country. The atmosphere was amazing and so were the people who provided this evening for us. I am so pleased to have experienced it as I find cultural practices to be deeply fascinating and always enjoy joining in with them. I would happily do it again. Written by Seren Johnston Year 12.

On our first day of arriving in Krakow the weather wasn't on our side as the rain seemed to become a constant, however, we didn't let that stop the groups from exploring the wonderful corners of the city. Our tour guide Paulina showed us around the different highlights of Krakow such as the Wawel Royal Castle where we learnt some of the fascinating history of the monarchy that lived there. The complex consists of numerous buildings of great historical and national importance, including the Wawel Cathedral where Polish monarchs were crowned and buried. It was very interesting for it to be open to the public as well as being able to hear about just a small snippet of historical events within Krakow and the importance it has upon Poland. On our way down from seeing the castle and standing in the beautifully designed courtyard we stopped to see the statue of the famous dragon, which thanks to our lucky timing, we were able to see it breathe fire which was very cool! Before we got to our next location on the tour Paulina informed us that we had arrived in Krakow on the perfect day as it was Fat Thursday (the Polish equivalent to pancake day) where everyone buys and shares donuts. We passed a bakery with delicious confectionery and nobody could resist getting a tasty treat. The next stop on the tour was the old Jewish quarter of the city where the incredible architecture surrounded us. This includes one of the oldest synagogues still in use within the city, along with beautiful memorial statues with stones placed by Jewish people to show their eternal respect for those who lost their lives. This was a very special thing to be able to witness. Finally, Paulina showed us around the city centre square, whilst explaining the historical significance it has had throughout not only WW2 but the entirety of the city's existence. It is a large part of trading and sales for locals throughout the ages and still continues today. A huge focal point of the square is St. Mary's Basilica, every hour, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, a trumpet signal calls the Hejnał mariacki which is played from the top of the tallest tower of Saint Mary's. The city is full of religious architecture with great significance to the city of Krakow. Despite the weather not being great it didn't stop us from absorbing knowledge and enjoying the wonderful sites of the beautiful city of Krakow. Megan Burford Year 13.



Help and support information

If you feel you may need help and support with the cost of living crisis the links below may be of use.

Is my child eligible to receive free school meals?

<https://www.gov.wales/free-school-meals-information-parents-and-carers>

Services and support that help with food costs. Information on food vouchers and food banks.

Penarth food pod:

https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/press_and_communications/latest_news/2022/March/New-Food-Pod-opens-in-Penarth.aspx

Vale Food Bank: <https://vale.foodbank.org.uk/get-help/foodbank-vouchers/#Vale%20foodbank>

Food Vale: <https://foodvale.org/where-can-i-get-support/>

How to get free or cheap food: <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/how-to-get-free-or-cheap-food/>

Find information on grants and benefits available to you such as Council Tax Reduction.

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/Cost-of-Living/Grants-and-benefits.aspx>

Get help with household and energy bills.

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/Cost-of-Living/Household-and-energy-bills.aspx>

If your child is in receipt of free schools meals and you would like to discuss any aspect of their school life please contact Mrs E Denscombe at denscombe@llantwitschool.org.uk

Classroom Expectations

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Be Ready

Engaged

Safe

Take Responsibility

BEING THE BEST WE CAN BE

Key Academic Dates 2023/2024

Spring 2024:

- **Start:** Monday 8 January 2024
- **Half term:** Monday 12 February 2024 to Friday 16 February 2024
- **End:** Friday 22 March 2024

Summer 2024:

- **Start:** Monday 8 April 2024
- **May Day BH:** Monday 6 May 2024
- **Half term:** Monday 27 May 2024 to Friday 31 May 2024
- **End:** Monday 22 July 2024 (**INSET**) (Students finish on Friday 19 July 2024)

INSET Days:

- **INSET Day 4:** Monday 19 February 2024
- **INSET Day 5:** Monday 8 July 2024
- **INSET Day 6:** Monday 22 July 2024

General Information

Contacting School

Please refrain from telephoning the school, other than for urgent purposes. For all general enquiries please email llantwitmajorhs@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk. **Please be reminded that we operate an appointments only system for meeting with parents/carers and if you present at school requesting an immediate appointment we will not be able to accommodate you.**

Forgotten Items

We can no longer accept the delivery of forgotten items such as PE kit, books, lunch boxes etc. during the school day. Please ensure your child arrives at school with the equipment needed for the day. In the exceptional case that you do need to bring an item into school for your child, you will be asked to leave it on the desk in the main entrance. This is to reduce traffic on to the school site and ensure student safety during lesson transitions.

Medication

Please note we **do not** stock medication of any kind in school, including paracetamol, and we are not allowed to dispense medication without parental consent. If your child receives prescribed medication a medical form, available from main Reception to be collected by your son/daughter, will be required to be completed and returned to Reception. Should your child need medication throughout the school day please ensure they bring just what is needed for the day to school with them.