

Christmas 2021 Newsletter - Welcome

As we reach the end of another extraordinary term, I wanted to introduce this term's newsletter by expressing my thanks to every member of our school community for the way in which they have managed the huge number of challenges we have faced since we returned to school in September.

To the students, congratulations on a successful term and well done for coping with all the changed routines we have introduced to keep you safe this term (and a big shout out to year 7 who have settled in so well!)

To all their parents and carers, thank you for all your support of the school and your children's learning both in school and during times when they have been isolating.

To the Governors for all their support and involvement in the school and its procedures.

And to the staff for their tireless commitment to their teaching, assessment and pastoral support roles which have never been more important. I have been hugely impressed by the way in which we have pulled together to deal with the ongoing global pandemic at a local level and recognise the part that everyone has played in that response.

So, thank you. Despite the focus on safe operation, face masks and hand sanitiser – we are delighted that we have still managed to provide so many opportunities for students to develop their interests and skills, and to engage with the wider community. Many of these things are reported in this newsletter and we hope you enjoy reading about them as you relax over the Christmas break. There will no doubt be new information and guidance for next term, which we will communicate to you as soon as we can, but in the meantime have a good holiday over Christmas and enjoy a well-earned rest!

Nadolig Llawen!

Mr Gerrard
Headteacher

Dates for your diary

Last day of term - Wednesday 22 December 2021

Staff training/preparation day - Friday 7 January 2022

First day of Spring term - Monday 10 January 2022

Year 11 Parents Evening - Tuesday 11 January 2022

Staff Training Day - Monday 24 January 2022

Year 12 & 13 Parents Evening - Tuesday 25 January 2022

Sixth Form Options Evening - Tuesday 1 February 2022

Year 9 Options Evening - Tuesday 15 February 2022

Last day before half-term - Friday 18th February 2022

Half term break - Monday 21st February - Friday 25th February 2022

Students return - Monday 28th February 2022



New Daily Timetable

We are adjusting the timings of the lessons and breaks in the school day.
This will start from
Monday 10th January 2022.

It means that students will start the day with their form tutors and we will be able to run assemblies in the morning again.

Start and finish times for the day will remain the same.

School Transport arrangements will also remain the same.

	Y7, 10, 12, 13	Y8, 9, 11
Reg : 8.50-9.10	Pastoral	Pastoral
Period 1 (1 hour)	P1/2 : 9.10-11.10	P1 : 9.10-10.10
		10.10-10.30
Period 2 (1 hour)	11.10-11.30	P2 : 10.30-11.30
	P3 : 11.30-12.30	P3 : 11.30-12.00
Period 3 (1 hour) / Lunch (40 mins)	Lunch 12.30-1.10	Lunch 12.00-12.40
		P3 : 12.40-1.10
Period 4 (1 hour)	P4/5 : 1.10-3.10	P4/5 : 1.10-3.10
Period 5 (1 hour)		

Cable Street - School Play



Rehearsals for this year's play are in full swing. Once again, we are participating in The National Theatre Connections scheme. The National theatre commissions 10 new plays for young performers which are challenging and exciting. Our chosen play is *Cable Street*.

It is about two girls growing up in London's Jewish east end in the 1930s. Leah and Kitty are blood sisters, best friends and more... but they get caught up in the political turmoil caused by Oswald Mosley's fascist Blackshirts. At the iconic Battle of Cable Street in 1936, hundreds of thousands of working class people come together to fight the police to defend the Jewish East End from fascism. Kitty and Leah are torn apart politically, their love for each other ensnared, like a rabbit in a trap. As their passion and the political tensions grow stronger and stronger, pulling each of them every which way, the snare can only get tighter and tighter until something snaps. The play will be performed in March.

New Schedule for LFD Testing

Please note that for those of you who have given permission for your children to receive and use Lateral Flow Device Tests, Welsh Government have changed their guidance regarding the frequency of testing. The expectation is that all staff and students of secondary age and above should test three times a week using LFDs (on Sunday night/Monday morning, Tuesday night/Wednesday morning and Thursday night/Friday morning) in the week before returning to school and to then continue testing regularly three times a week after the start of term in January.

If your child (years 7 to 11) is not currently participating in the testing programme and you would like them to, then please email info@aberconwy.conwy.sch.uk to request an electronic consent form so that your child can be given the LFD test equipment. Please note this form must be completed by a parent.

Students in years 12 and 13 must complete their own electronic consent form which will be made available to them on their Year Group Team. They do not need to have parental consent.

Please watch the film below for help and advice about how to use the test equipment and complete the test.



School Uniform Assistance



'Struggling with the rising costs of uniforms?

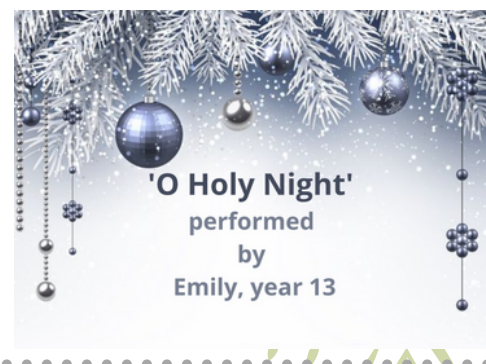
We have small selection of Nearly New uniform available, please contact your child's guidance mentor for further information.'

(Click here to see a list of the Year Group Mentors and their contact e-mails)

The 12 Performances of Christmas

Sadly, this year we were not able to present our annual carol concert in the church. However, we launched our 12 Performances of Christmas on the 7th December that saw the Performing Arts department add a new Christmas performance to the school website daily to help get everyone in the festive mood!

Please see a sample of the videos below or [use this link to visit our website to see all the outstanding performances.](#)



Gold for Jacob



We would like to congratulate year 12 student, Jacob on his outstanding achievement in the Long jump.

Jacob competed in the Welsh National Athletic Championships, held in Newport in August and came first, winning gold with a jump of 6.31m! Jacob regularly travels to Wrexham for specialist training and is now ranked number one in Wales for the under 17s by the official power of ten, where all UK athletes are officially ranked.

Well done Jacob!



On The Road to Cleaner Air & Wind Turbines Workshop

Year 7, 8 and 9 Eco Council members recently took part in a workshop where they explored different ways to tackle air pollution and looked at ways emissions might be reduced across Wales. They also learnt how a wind turbine works, and how they are engineered and constructed. Working in small teams, the students were then asked to design and create the most efficient wind turbine.

The students set to work, using redesigned wind turbine model kits to build their own turbines and then recorded how much energy they generated, adjusting their designs to maximise efficiency throughout the experiment until each team had a design they were happy with. We would like to thank EESW / STEM Cymru for providing the students with such a thought provoking and practical workshop.



Art at the Royal Cambrian Academy Gallery



Art students from Years 9, 10, 12 and 13 have visited the Royal Cambrian Academy Gallery in Conwy where they have gained some inspiration from the recent exhibition called 'Art of Perseverance'. This exhibition showcased the ways in which six artists have used art to cope.

Students were able to see inspirational artworks from talented artists Jan Gardner, Iwan Gwyn Parry, Peter Holloway, Mary Lloyd Jones, Tim Pugh and Gilly Thomas. Though each of these artists have faced different challenges, they are united in their use of art to continue through difficult times. Art, for them, is perseverance.

The last year has been particularly challenging for the arts and creative industries, despite this one of our students has been given the fantastic opportunity to exhibit her artwork at the gallery. Sixth form student, Lucy Birtwistle's collection of her favourite pieces created during lockdown, are currently on display in the "Art in the Cupboard" cabinet in the lower gallery stairwell for all to see.



An outstanding achievement, well done Lucy!

Children in Need Fundraising Success

A huge thank you to everyone that helped us to raise a school record for Children in Need. A total of £3000 was raised through a variety of events including fancy dress, delicious bake sales, readathons and marathons!

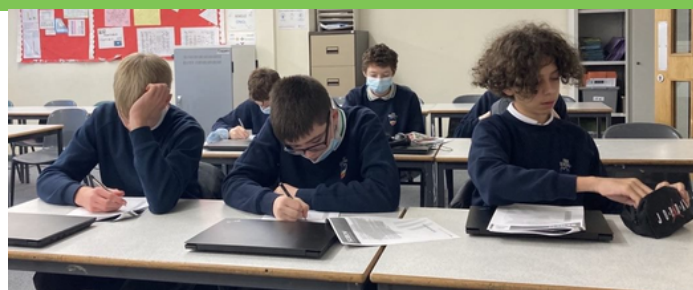
A big shout out to our top fundraiser, Joshua in year 7, who raised £320 by cycling to the top of Snowdon.

Well done also, to all the staff and students who completed the Conwy Half-Marathon raising money for Children in Need and St David's Hospice.

We are so proud of everyone that got involved!



SEREN Goal Mapping Event



Our year 9 Seren students were given the opportunity to attend the first SEREN session of the year which looked at 'Goal Mapping'.

Students completed the session online, where they engaged in numerous written and physical activities focused on their current and future goals. Students used their Seren reflective journals at the start and end of the session. This put students in the correct mind set for the session and then allowed them to reflect on what they'd learnt and how they would apply their new skills in the future.

The students who took part in this session found it very informative and are looking forward to taking part in the next SEREN event.

Another Cycling Success for Sam



Congratulations to year 9 student, Sam Stewart-Ball for gaining 3rd place and a podium position in the Welsh CycloCross Championships in Llanelli, South Wales!

Sam also became the youngest person to complete the Pan Celtic Ultra Distance bike race back in July, where he raised over £1500 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and now features in the documentary about the race.

[If you would like to watch the documentary please click here.](#)

Sophie to Represent Wales

We are very proud to announce that one of our year 11 students was selected to represent Wales as part of the Women's Under 17 squad in the UEFA Women's U17 EURO Qualifying Tournament.

Sophie has travelled with the squad to Gothenburg, Sweden to play against Italy, France and hosts Sweden in the mini-tournament.

This is the first time the Women's Under 17 EURO had been held since matches were postponed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020.

We would like to congratulate Sophie on her fantastic achievement and wish Sophie and the Welsh team the best of luck!



Sixth Form Students Raise Funds for Local Charity



Ysgol Aberconwy sixth form students chose Tŷ Gobaith (Hope House) for our local charity appeal this year and organised a number of events which raised a fantastic £1,275. These funds will help the charity to continue to provide palliative care to children and support for their families, ensuring every family facing the death of a child gets the very best care and support when and where they need it.

Vanessa Marubbi, Area Fundraiser for Hope House and Tŷ Gobaith Children's Hospices said, "What a wonderful fundraising effort from such a considerate and hard-working group. We would not be able to do what we do without the help of tremendous local community appeals such as these. Thank you so much to everyone at Ysgol Aberconwy"

We have been overwhelmed and humbled by the generosity shown during this genuine community appeal by students, staff, local partners and businesses who all kindly donated various gifts and prizes.

Mr Rhydian Jones, School Charity Co-Ordinator said, "I am extremely proud of these students' efforts who had the drive and initiative to set up personal GoFundMe pages, source raffle prizes, arrange a school fancy dress day amongst a host of other activities. Fundraising can be difficult at the best of times but our students have shown great ingenuity and resilience in how they went about this fundraising appeal. I am incredibly proud of how the whole school community came together in support of Tŷ Gobaith's invaluable work."

Eco Council Students Achieve Awards



Members from the school Eco Council, made up of representatives from all year groups, enjoyed their first group stay at Bod Silyn cottage where they worked together to achieve the John Muir Awards and the Junior Forester's Awards.

Carrying full rucksacks, they forged new friendships as they explored the fringes of Snowdonia National Park before establishing a camp and cooking food over a campfire. They spent the evening star gazing and identifying some of the constellations that they would be sleeping under and learning about the history of Bod Silyn. Sam, a year 12 student really enjoyed his time at Bod Silyn, he said, "The cottage is cool and I loved cooking over the fire."

The following day they learnt how to use a bow saw and a pruning saw safely as they helped to clear some rhododendron and other invasive species. They also built a sawhorse and learnt how to tie knots and make lashings in the process. Year 9 student, Nell, found the practical elements fun, she said "I liked clearing the bushes and using the saws."

During the two days, students worked hard to increase their knowledge and understanding of the natural environment which resulted in them achieving the John Muir Award, which encourages people to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places by completing four Challenges that lie at the heart of the award: Discover, Explore, Conserve, Share.

Due to their practical pruning and conservation efforts, they also completed their Junior Forester Award, which gives children and young people an insight into a career in Forestry, as well as the practical ability to assist in woodland management in their schools and local communities. These new-found skills will help the Eco Council members with their aim to improve the school environment and establish Ysgol Aberconwy as an Eco School.

Mr Colin O'Rourke, Director of Learning – Outdoor Learning said, "The pupils enjoyed exploring the school's land and cottage and had a great time. They will take home some great memories and a few blisters! I look forward to taking the lower school Eco Council to Bod Silyn, with a few of the older pupils as helpers."

It seems that the students are equally keen to return, with year 11 student, Kieran saying that he wanted to go back and help out with the lower school Eco Council visit too.

Shana Takes the Wicket

We would like to congratulate, year 9 student, Shana who has been awarded Top Wicket Taker for Bangor Cricket Club in the 3rd X1 Team.

She recently received this award at a presentation evening at Bangor Cricket Club along with another award for bowling; she took 3 wickets in 5 overs in one off performance for a junior in the senior league.

Shana, aged just 13, has played her first season in The North Wales Cricket League, and is usually the only female playing in these matches, where she plays with and against men and boys aged 13 and over.

She usually plays for Bangor 3rd X1 but has also been asked on several occasions to play for their 2nd X1 in the first division too. In the whole of the 3rd x1 division in North Wales, Shana came 3rd overall in the bowling stats! A fantastic achievement!



Performing Arts Showcase



The Performing Arts department held their first showcase on Wednesday 13th October. This was the first time Film, Media and Performing Arts students from years 10 to 13 have had the opportunity to put on a performance since covid-19 hit. The showcase was enjoyed by an audience of staff and students and over 100 students took part.

Head of Performing Arts, Ms Nikki Wilson said, "The showcase really demonstrated how much talent we have at Ysgol Aberconwy".

Aberconwy Allies Create Documentary Film

At the start of the year, students in Year 9 were given the opportunity to take part in a project to help promote acceptance and inclusion, and to start to embed equality into the curriculum. During online meetings, and then in person group sessions, we created a series of TikToks about the experiences faced by marginalised communities and how to become allies. Filmmaker Lal Davies captured the process and created a documentary to highlight our work. The project was done in partnership with NWREN and funded by the Welsh Government.

[To watch the film please click here.](#)

Congratulations to....

the following students for their outstanding achievements this term:

Our Y8 cadets, Aleena, Megan and Freiya who wore their uniforms to school and sold poppies for Remembrance Day – raising approximately £80 for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.

The members of Tegfan, Hafan and Pontio who helped produce 30kg of organic pumpkins that were used in school canteen to make lunches.

The Year 8 Ysgol Aberconwy Girls Football Team who played against Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy on Thursday 4th November and won 5-1!! Goals were scored by Olivia and Aimee.

Massive congratulations to all who took part!

Our Urdd Conwy Eisteddfod 20/21 winners:

Lucian for achieving 1st place and Hannah for coming 2nd place for their entries in the 395 Prose Yr.7 (L) competition and also to Libby who was awarded 3rd Place in the 397 Prose Yrs.10 and 11 (L) competition.

Keavy in year 7, who was asked to provide feedback for a new app called the Blue light Hub and now features in a promotional film for the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust.

The app aims to teach everyone about the emergency services and the NHS using four games.

Emma, Dylan and Lillie who were the winners of the nature art competition.

Blwyddyn 10/ Year 10 for reaching a combined total of 1,500 achievement points, a fantastic accomplishment!

to 7DC for winning the year 7 inter-class football competition!

Our 'Diwrnod Shwmae, Su'mae' Competition Winners:

Iard Blwyddyn 7-9

1st - Caden 7DC, 2nd-Julia 8HC a 3rd -Siobhan, 8DC

The new name for the year 7-9 yard is '**Y Sgwâr**'

Iard Blwyddyn 10-11

1st - Yr Adran Gymraeg, 2nd - Lillee 11LLC a Dewi 7DM, 3rd - Amber 10LLC, Nia 10LLC a Kia 8DC

The new name for the year 10-11 yard is '**Glanrafon**'.

Rowan and Korben in year 13, Aaron and Sam in year 12, Kieran in year 11, Amelia in year 10 and Nell and Erin in year 9 who were recently presented with their John Muir Awards.

Inspiring and preparing young people for their future



Gyrfa Cymru
Careers Wales



Uyweddwrth Cymru
Welsh Government

Please see the first edition of the Careers Wales newsletter by clicking [here](#)!

Read the newsletter to see how you can access the most up to date careers information, advice and guidance.

You will have a key role in helping your child make decisions. If you would like support for you and your child when it comes to making important subject and career choices, please get in touch with your child's Career Advisor

Sofia Enston

by calling: 0800 028 4844 or emailing: sofia.enston@careerswales.gov.wales

Christmas Dinner is Served



On Wednesday, 15th December, Sodexo staff spread a little festive cheer by dressing up to serve students and staff a delicious Christmas dinner.



Accelerated Readers

Our Accelerated Reader programme continues to be a great success in encouraging our Year 7 and 8 students to read fiction with 100% participation. We have 6 students who have read more than a million words since September and one, Ian Barber, who has read an unbelievable 66 books and a total of 5 million words! Our new look Library is clearly having a positive impact on reading.



Kyle Receives Football Scholarship

A former year 11 student who finished at Ysgol Aberconwy last July with fantastic CGSE results, has begun a 2-year paid scholarship at Salford Football Club. Kyle, who now spends most of his week living away whilst training with the club, was originally offered a scholarship at Tranmere Rovers Football Club. However after a successful week's trial at Salford he was offered this amazing scholarship opportunity.

Kyle is now living in Manchester during the week as a full-time football scholar, as well as continuing his education with a course at Altrincham College.

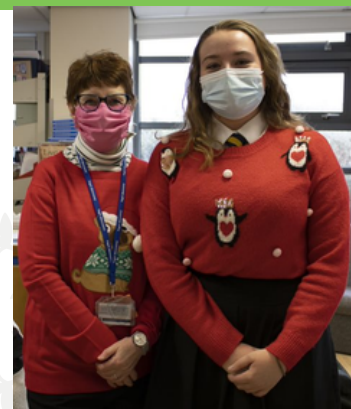
We wish Kyle the best of luck in this game and his future football career.



Christmas Jumper Day for Save the Children



A massive thank you to all the staff and students who participated in Christmas Jumper Day raising a lovely £475.00 for Save the Children



Schoolgateway App

Don't forget to let us know if your contact details change so that we are still able to contact you by e-mail or text via the Schoolgateway App.

If you do not have an account, don't worry!

All you need to do is to e-mail your mobile number and the full name of your child to:

parentapp@aberconwy.conwy.sch.uk

and we'll create an account for you. For more information, please go to:

https://www.aberconwy.conwy.sch.uk/en_gb/school-gateway-app/

Merry Christmas

We wish you a happy, restful and peaceful Christmas and look forward to welcoming students back for the new term on Monday 10th January

