

Newsletter - Welcome



As we reach the end of another busy term, I wanted to start this term's newsletter by expressing my thanks to every member of our school community for all you do to make the place such an inspiring, supportive and successful school. We continue to lead the way as far as developing the new 'Curriculum for Wales' is concerned and have welcomed a number of other schools to share the things that we are doing in the classroom. We have welcomed TV crews from ITV and the BBC, hosted visits from our local MP and Welsh Government and have been asked to share our work in developing the use of the Welsh Language, on leadership, on languages teaching and on 'assessment' across the region. We remain one of the only schools in Wales to retain the 'Corporate Health Standard' and continue to develop our support strategies for students in our specialist provisions – it's no wonder we will be full again on intake for September 2023!!

We are also delighted of course that we have managed to provide so many opportunities for each and every student to develop their interests and skills, and to engage with the wider community. Many of these things are reported in this newsletter but we were particularly pleased to be able to run the first skiing trip since the pandemic began.

Whilst the summer term will no doubt see a focus on exam preparation – starting of course with our Easter Revision School for years 11, 12 and 13 - we are also looking forward to welcoming year 6 to our 'transition week' again, the return of sports day and our annual 'Rewards' trip.

We know how important these, and the many other things that happen in and around school, are to you - we hope you enjoy reading about them as you relax over the Easter break and look forward to sharing more activities, news and achievements over the summer.

Have a good holiday over Easter and enjoy a well-earned rest!

Pasg hapus!

Mr Gerrard
Headteacher



Dates for Your Diary

Last day of term for Easter - Friday 31st March 2023

Students return to school - Monday 17th April 2023

Bank Holiday - Monday 1st May 2023

Year 8 Parents' Evening - Tuesday 16th May 2023

Last day before half-term - Friday 26th May 2023

Students return to school - Monday 5th June 2023

Staff Training Day - Friday 23rd June 2023

Staff Training Day - Monday 3rd July 2023

Year 7 Parents' Evening - Tuesday 11th July 2023

Last day of term before summer holiday - Thursday 20th July 2023

To keep up to date with term times and staff training days, see the calendar on our website which covers the academic year.

(https://www.aberconwy.conwy.sch.uk/en_gb/calendar/)

Revision Support Sessions

We are also delighted to be able to offer our year 11, 12 and 13 students the opportunity to attend in school revision sessions during the Easter holidays, from the 11th -15th April.

Please have a look at the information on our Exam Support webpage to find out more and to see the schedule for the different year groups and courses.

This page also includes lots of useful revision tools, links and tips.

To see the latest summer examination timetables for GCSE, AS and A Level exams, please visit our Examination and Testing Webpage.

Celebrating Chinese New Year

Ysgol Aberconwy students enjoyed live Chinese New Year celebrations for the first time since 2019! During the last few years, students have had the opportunity to celebrate the Lunar New Year new year via online sessions provided by Cardiff Confucius Institute's tutors. However, from the 23rd January, we enjoyed a week of cross-curricular sessions within the classroom.

KS3 students attended their usual lessons but with a Chinese theme. Activities included Chinese calligraphy, learning Mandarin, paper cutting, origami rabbits, calculating Chinese currency, tai chi, cooking egg fried rice, creative writing, lantern making, learning about the Terracotta army, the geography of China and the survival of pandas.

We were delighted to be able to celebrate with our current Chinese Teacher, Mr Zigeng. We were also very fortunate to have Miss Qi Zhang visit us from Ysgol Eirias. Both teachers shared their expertise and knowledge with students, delivering sessions in tai chi, origami and paper cutting.

Zayna and Max [Y7] and Ethan [Y8] delivered a week of assemblies highlighting the key facts and the importance of celebrating this Chinese festival. All three students did themselves proud by committing to these assemblies for an entire week, and managing to stand in front of a different year group each day.

A Zodiac Rabbit Arts competition was held for all Key Stages as well as a Chinese New year puzzle. Congratulations to all our competition winners!



A Trip to Pontio



Year 12 and 13 students who study Welsh (Second Language) A level recently enjoyed a trip to Pontio in Bangor to see a new Welsh language film called Y Sŵn. The film dramatises the true story of how S4C was established following a wave of civil disobedience caused by the broken promise of the British Government to establish a Welsh language television channel



Not only did the students enjoy this experience, it will benefit their A level work as it is part of the A level syllabus to study the history of Wales and the Welsh language across the years. Mrs Williams and Mrs Parry also enjoyed it too!

Holocaust Survivor Shares his Story

On Monday 30th January the Year 13 History students had the opportunity to listen to a talk from Henry Schachter, who is a first generation Holocaust survivor.

The students were able to listen to Henry talk about how his family life in Germany was changed forever once the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, and how his mother had no choice but to send him to what she thought would be the safety of France when he was just 5 years old. Henry lost both his mother and father during the Holocaust, as well as many relatives.

It was a real privilege to be able to listen to Henry's story, and parts of the talk was broadcast on ITV Wales later on that day. Our Sixth Formers were a real credit to themselves and the school and they all took a huge amount away from the talk.



Meeting Mererid



Year 7 Welsh first language students took part in an online virtual meeting with the Welsh poet, author and professor Mererid Hopwood where they were able to ask her questions about the poem they had been studying from her collection – ‘Fy Mabinogi i’ which was based on the earliest Welsh prose stories (legends). They also discussed the importance of Welsh and learning languages before the students had a go at writing their own short story inspired by the Welsh legends they had learnt about.

Support with school essentials costs



As the cost of living rises, no child should go without. In Wales, nearly half of parents are not claiming the free school meals that their children are entitled to. We would like to remind you of the types of support you might be entitled to:

Don't miss out on **Free School Meals**.

School meals promote healthy eating, increase the variety of food your child might eat, and can improve behaviour and social skills. If you receive certain benefits, or your circumstances have changed, check if you're entitled through [Conwy County Borough Council](#).

There could be more help available through **School Essentials (PDG Access)**. It can help pay for things like school uniform, school shoes, sports kit, stationery and other equipment. If you're eligible for Free School Meals, you might be entitled to this funding.

You can check [here](#).

(Please note, if you are in receipt of a certain income, parents will still need to apply separately for School Essentials (PDG Access) to access all of the funding available)

Welsh Legends



Myrddin ap Dafydd, a Welsh writer, publisher and poet recently visited Ysgol Aberconwy to meet with our year 7 Welsh first language students to discuss some of the local legends included in his book about Welsh legends from the Conwy Valley.

Students learned about the legend of Llys Helig, the palace of Helig ap Glannawg which supposedly once stood somewhere between Penmaenmawr, Llandudno and Ynys Seiriol (Puffin Island), which was destroyed by a great flood sometime in the 6th Century.

They also enjoyed hearing stories about the river Conwy's monstrous beaver, The Owl of Cwm Cowlyd said to be one of the oldest animals in the world, and Santes Ffraid (Saint Brigid) in Glan Conwy who fed the hungry villagers.

Exploring Creative Pathways



A group of forty five students from year 9 spent the day in Abergele actively exploring creative pathways. They took part in a wide range of activities such as stage make-up, circus skill, film editing and dance.

Year 7 Eisteddfod

Tuesday, February 28th saw the return of our year 7 inter house school Eisteddfod. We saw a wide variety of competitions on stage, from singing and instrumentals to group recitals. We also had homework tasks set by different subjects, a special mention to all who competed in the French and German cooking bake off – they were all very tasty!


The pinnacle of the day was the traditional chair and crown ceremony. Congratulations to Seren for winning the chair competition for writing an original legend and Daniel for winning both the crown and the Welsh learner medal competitions.

The overall winner of the day with an impressive 328 points was Llugwy house and we will see their name on the Eisteddfod shield for the very first time!

We ended the day with our special guest and past pupil Alistair James singing Yma o Hyd and the Welsh National Anthem.



Welsh Weightlifting Champion!



Congratulations to Zach in year 7 who has recently defended his U12 Welsh Weightlifting championship title, making him a two time Welsh champion. He is now the current Welsh and British champion in his category and class!

Zach became interested in weightlifting when his older brother took up the sport and at just seven years old he started training with his coach Holly Knowles, who has represented Wales at the Commonwealth Games. He now trains three times a week and has competed all over Britain.

Zach won his first competition during the Covid-19 lockdown, where he won a British weightlifting on-line competition, lifting at home in his garage. He won his first competition medal at the Welsh championships, qualifying in second place when he was just 10. This was followed by another silver medal at another Welsh event later that year, which qualified him for his first British tournament where he also won silver.

Last year he won the Welsh championships but his biggest achievement to date was when he won Gold at the British Championships in the under 12 category for his weight class in November 2022. What a fantastic achievement!

His most recent success has qualified him to return to the British Championships to defend his title later this year. We wish Zach all the best in this competition (and all future competitions) and hope that he returns victorious, as a 2 times British Champion too.



Connections - Innocent Creatures



Staff, parents and students enjoyed 3 days of performances of the play *Innocent Creatures*. The group will next perform the play in Aberystwyth.



Siarter Iaith Poster Competition

The school has started on its journey to the Siarter Iaith (Welsh Language Charter) Bronze Award. The Siarter Iaith is a National Award awarded to schools in Wales to congratulate schools on their use of Welsh. One resource needed in order to achieve the Siarter Iaith Bronze Award was some engaging posters to encourage staff and students to use their Welsh skills around school.

Students from all years were therefore invited to enter an art competition to design the best poster promoting different types of Welsh phrases and messages. The Welsh department received lots of fantastic entries but eventually decided on the following three worthy winners.

Congratulations to Daniel in 8LLC who came first. Second place was awarded to Amelia in 9DC and third place was given to Jensen in 7HM.



Skiing in Austria

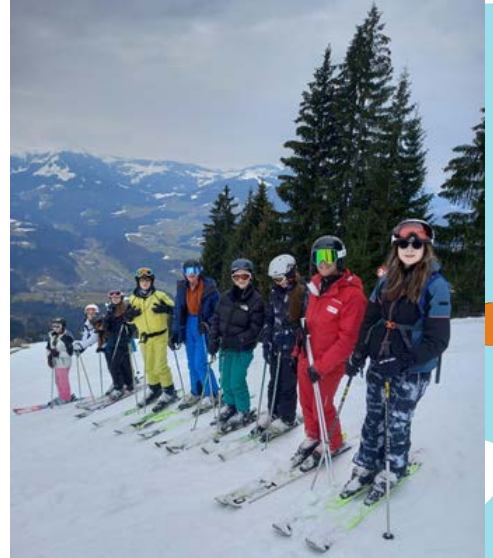
It was with great excitement for students, staff and parents alike that we set off from school at the end of February for the first Aberconwy school ski trip since the pandemic. 81 students, ranging from year 8 up to year 12, with 10 staff in two coaches set off for Hopfgarten im Brixental in the Ski Welt region in Austria. We had all been avidly watching the snow cameras in the resort and knew that we were expecting warm days skiing, so had our fingers crossed that the snow would still be good.



We weren't disappointed. There were a wide range of slopes for all abilities of skier in a resort made up from several setting off points around a large mountain area. All of the students were challenged and improved their skiing under excellent instruction from local ski guides. The sun shone and we all had a fantastic time. Our hotel was really excellent, with

great food, comfortable rooms and friendly, helpful staff. They ran a disco for us one night, with some staff and students dressing up. They set up karaoke nights and games evenings in the fantastic lounge area. We also enjoyed swimming in Kitsbuel and night-time bum boarding on the local nursery slope.

The students were fantastically well behaved which made the trip great fun for everyone involved. The hotel staff were honestly flabbergasted that young people were capable of clearing up after themselves at mealtimes and managed to leave their rooms spic and span at the end of the week. Huge congratulations to all 81 young people and many thanks from all the staff who enjoyed their company so much.



Celebrating Pi Day



Students in Mr Geraint Simpson's year 7 Maths class celebrated 'Pi Day' by studying some history, learning about Anglesey born mathematician and teacher, William Jones, the first person to use a symbol to represent the platonic concept of pi. They then learnt some Welsh mathematical terms linked with pi and expressed opinions in Welsh about mathematics and other subjects.

Planting for the Planet

Twelve of our year 7 students recently enjoyed an overnight stay at Bod Silin, our cottage nestled in the Snowdonia National Park, where they each earnt an environmental award. They achieved the John Muir Award, an award that aims to develop awareness and responsibility for the natural environment through fun, adventure and exploration, by working outdoors together and collectively planting 42 native trees within the parkland.



Conwy Eisteddfod Success!

We are very proud to announce that Erin in year 9 has won the Girl's Solo for year 7, 8 and 9 in the Conwy County Regional Urdd Eisteddfod. As the winner of this category she will now represent Conwy county in the National Urdd Eisteddfod in Carmarthenshire (Sir Gaerfyrddin). We wish her the best of luck!



Cystadleuaeth:		
15 - Unawd Merched Bl.7, 8 a 9		
Enw	Cangen	Canlyniad
Erin Davies	Ysgol Aberconwy	1af
Lois Owen	Ysgol Dyffryn Conwy	2il
Lily Rowlands	Ysgol Y Creuddyn	3ydd



A Mural for Conwy Station



Students have once again joined Andy Birch (Dime One graffiti artist) to create a second train station mural at Conwy railway station. This mural aims to deter trespass and anti-social behaviour at railway stations and also introduces the theme of the heritage of our local area. The students had a brilliant time and the result looks fantastic!

Thank you to Transport for Wales for funding this amazing project, the British Transport Police and of course Dime One for making it a wonderful experience for everyone involved.

