

Autumn 2

Newsletter

NEWS

THIS HALF TERM

It's been another busy half term here in Ystruth with lots of our families coming through the door to celebrate Christmas. Thank you all for your continued support - it is very much appreciated.

Family Action have created a self-help article for families supporting neurodivergent children at Christmas. Christmas often brings changes to usual routines and activities, which can result in uncertainty, anxious feelings and dysregulation. The article explains why Christmas can be a tricky time for neurodivergent children, and provides some positive strategies to help.

CONTACT US

Mrs Melanie Miller

Headteacher

Mrs Amy Skuse

Deputy Headteacher

School Number: 01495 369239

School Website: <https://www.ystruthprimary.co.uk/>

NEXT HALF TERM DATES

15.01.26 - PS1 show in school 'The Great Big Bug Show'

22.01.26 - Year 6 trip to Parc Stormy. Details to follow shortly.

13.02.26 - INSET DAY - Closed to pupils

16.02.26 - Half Term

09.02.26 - Parent Consultation week

27.03.26 - INSET DAY - Closed to pupils

30.03.26 - Easter Holiday

Autumn 2

Newsletter

LANGUAGES

FRANCAIS

Puis-je...?

May I...?



BRAWDDEG Y MIS

Ga i...?

May I...?



LEARNING

We have continued to use our 'Y Wal Wella' in school to help us improve our work and the pupils are doing amazing

Next half term, we will be working on the next two questions to help us in our learning:

1. How do you know?
2. How can you improve?

Our context topics for next half term are as follows:

Nurse - My Family and My Home

Reception - Me and My Family

Year 1 and Year 2 - How I Get Around

Year 3 and Year 4 - Commotion in the Ocean

Year 5 and Year 6 - It's Our World

Robins - Our School

Owls - Our School



FRIENDS OF YSTRUTH

Our fantastic Friends of Ystruth have raised over £760 this year through the raffles and the Movie Mornings. Thank you all so much for supporting this and we look forward to arranging more experiences for the children this year through the funds raised.

RIGHTS OF THE MONTH

January - Article 1 - Everyone the age of 18 has rights. Article 4 - The Government will do all they can to protect children's rights.

February - Article 17, Access to information from the media - Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.



Autumn 2

Newsletter

Attendance Matters!

AS YOU ARE AWARE, THE SCHOOL ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO MAINTAINING HIGH LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY.

AS PART OF THE WELSH GOVERNMENT'S DRIVE TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE LEVELS ACROSS ALL SCHOOLS IN WALES, WE ARE MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT ALL OUR PUPILS BENEFIT FROM REGULAR ATTENDANCE.

OUR ASPIRATIONAL ATTENDANCE TARGET FOR THIS ACADEMIC YEAR IS **92%**.

BELOW IS A TABLE THAT SHOWS HOW MUCH LEARNING CAN BE MISSED IN ONE SCHOOL YEAR. THE EDUCATION WELFARE TEAM WORKS CLOSELY WITH THE SCHOOL, AND EWOS ARE UNDERTAKING VISITS TO DISCUSS PUPIL ATTENDANCE.

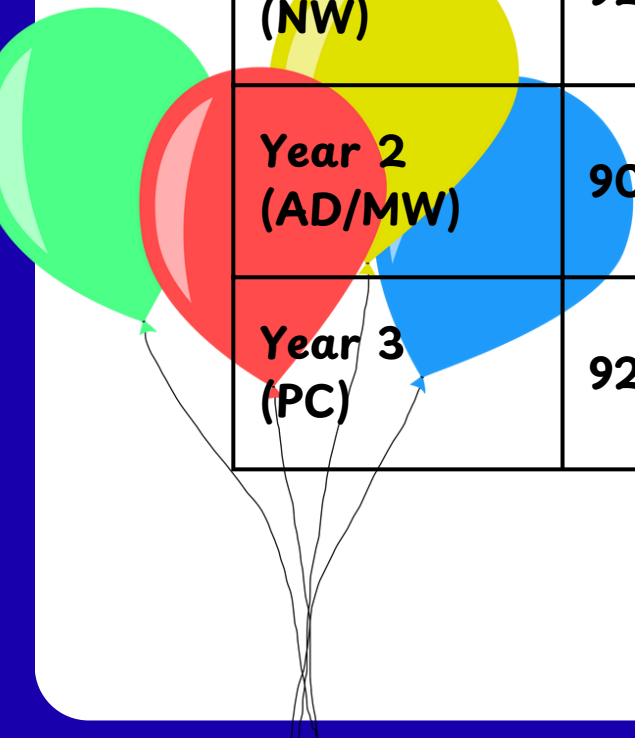
Attendance	Learning missed in ONE school year
100% attendance	0 days of learning missed - best chance of success!
95% attendance	2 weeks of learning missed
90% attendance	4 weeks of learning missed – poor attendance
85% attendance	5 ½ weeks of learning missed – very poor attendance
80% attendance	At least 7 ½ weeks of learning missed. You are at risk of prosecution

Autumn 2 Newsletter

Attendance Matters!

ATTENDANCE THIS HALF TERM

Nursery AM (EH)	88%	Year 3/4 (SH)	90.9%
Nursery PM (EH)	79.9%	Year 4 (AM)	92.9%
Reception (LC)	95.5%	Year 5 (KM)	90.5%
Year 1 (SH)	87.5%	Year 5/6 (SP)	91.6%
Year 1/2 (NW)	92.7%	Year 6 (JY)	91.9%
Year 2 (AD/MW)	90.3%	Robins (DH)	91.6%
Year 3 (PC)	92.5%	Owls (AW/HA)	89%



Autumn 2 Newsletter

Our Attendance Winners for this
term are...

RECEPTION CLASS

YAY!

ATTENDANCE ACTIONS

We will be celebrating attendance weekly in assembly with the winning class having an attendance award and an extra 5 minutes of play (as decided by our children).

Those that have 100% attendance for a week will also have 2 Dojo points!

We will be doing attendance certificates termly instead of half termly and there will be special rewards for those that have 100% attendance at the end of the year!



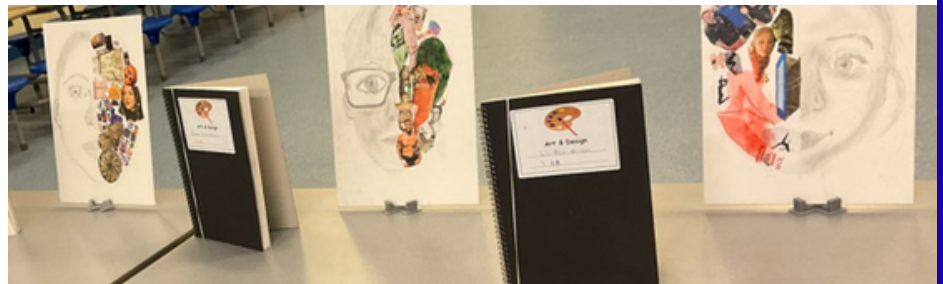
What's been happening?



Reception had a wonderful time at the Hay Festival learning all about reading and being creative.



Our Year 5/6 Class put on an excellent exhibition showcasing their amazing drawing skills and producing fantastic self portraits.



Year 5 have been learning a new skill and learnt to sew! They have enjoyed being creative and expressing themselves!

What's been happening?



Three Schools Carol Concert



Yet again, Miss Hall and Mrs Grindle worked their magic again producing a marvellous trio of songs from our choir. A huge well done to all involved and a massive 'Thank You' to all who supported this event.

Our Grand School Council members were invited to the Remembrance service in Blaina. They read the poem 'In Flanders Fields' and laid a wreath on behalf of the whole of Ystruth Primary. We later had and Remembrance assembly in school.



What's been happening?

Year 1/2NW enjoyed carrying out a science investigation using torches and identifying shadows.



Year 3/4SH put their creative skills to the test making their handheld Hungarian harps out of clay following their chosen design.



We all had a lovely Christmas assembly from Pastor Amanda who spoke about the real meaning behind Christmas.



HAVE YOUR SAY!

BLAENAU GWENT COUNCIL IS CONSULTING ON INTRODUCING A CATCHMENT AREA FOR BRYNMAWR FOUNDATION SCHOOL AND DETERMINE THE CATCHMENT AREAS FOR YSGOL GYMRAEG TREDEGAR AND YSGOL GYMRAEG BRO HELYG.

THE STATUTORY CONSULTATION WILL RUN FROM NOON 12TH DECEMBER 2025 UNTIL 5.00 P.M. ON 5TH JANUARY 2026. A COPY OF THE DOCUMENT CAN BE FOUND AT:
[CONSULTATIONS | BLAENAU GWENT CBC](#)

FOLLOWING THIS, THE COUNCIL WILL THEN COLLECT, REVIEW AND SUMMARISE ALL OF THE FEEDBACK. THIS REPORT WILL THEN BE PRESENTED TO CABINET IN APRIL 2026 AND BE CONSIDERED AND A DECISION TAKEN IF THE PROPOSAL IS TO BE IMPLEMENTED.

THE REPORT WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR ALL CONSULTEES TO VIEW.

YOU CAN SUBMIT YOUR VIEWS

- BY E-MAIL TO

SCHOOLADMISSIONS@BLAENAU-GWENT.GOV.UK

- BY COMPLETING A SNAP SURVEY :

[HTTPS://ONLINE1.SNAPSURVEYS.COM/410WPU](https://online1.snapsurveys.com/410WPU)

SHOULD YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL OPERATIONS TEAMS USING THE CONTACT DETAILS ABOVE. THE CLOSING DATE FOR RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION IS 5 P.M. ON 5TH JANUARY 2026 IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ON THE PROPOSAL, PLEASE CONTACT THE ADMISSIONS TEAM BY EMAILING
SCHOOLADMISSIONS@BLAENAU-GWENT.GOV.UK

Tel / Ffôn: 01495 311556

Email / E-bost: 21stcenturyschools@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Our Ref. / Ein Cyf. SR/JC

Your Ref. / Eich Cyf. An other

Date. / Dyddiad. 8th December 2025



Dear Consultee,

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Cabinet has agreed to commence a formal consultation on the following proposal:

Proposal to Extend the Capacity at Pen y Cwm Special School

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council propose to extend the capacity at Pen y Cwm Special School from 175 to 205 places, with effect from September 2026. With an additional 45 places in 2030/31 for a capacity of 250 learners. In addition, and alongside this, the Council identified that post 16 provision would need to be removed from its current location on site and housed in Vision House Ebbw Vale which creates a more sustained provision less than half a mile from the existing building. The Council are committed to keep working with the school to develop a long-term plan to support sustained growth and development. Therefore, this proposal will be delivered in 2 parts:

- **Part 1**, to increase the capacity of Pen y Cwm Special School from 175 to 205 places in preparation for the 2026/27 academic year. This will also involve:
 - Retrospectively acknowledging the Post 16 provision at Unit 4 Festival Site in Ebbw Vale (including 3 classrooms, sensory room, common room, life skills room, meeting room, catering/dining area, toilets and hygiene facilities)
 - Retrospective acknowledgement of additional classrooms developed in the main school building.
- **Part 2**, to further increase the capacity of Pen y Cwm Special School from 205 to 250 places in preparation for the 2030/31 academic year. This will involve continuing with the development of the long-term plan to secure additional capacity including either a new build provision on the land adjacent to the school or remodelling the existing school building to accommodate the increased capacity.

The consultation period will begin on Monday 8th December 2025 and will close on Sunday 18th January 2026. The regulations require that consultees must be given at least 42 days to respond to the consultation document, with at least 20 of these being school days.

Any comments/observations on the proposal can be made:

- By email: 21stcenturyschools@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn cyfathrebu gyda chi yn eich dewis iaith, dim ond i chi rhoi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh and English and we will communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

Or via the below link:

<https://online1.snapsurveys.com/dxns7v>

A consultation drop in event will be held in Ebbw Vale for interested parties please see webpage or consultation document for details. Dedicated arrangements will be made for children and young people to participate in the consultation, which will include, where possible, the views of the Grand School Council. Pupils will be issued with their own version of the consultation document and will have an opportunity to discuss the proposals and submit their views and comments.

The Education Resources and Planning team from the Council will ensure all comments/views made are recorded to allow informed decisions to be made at the appropriate time. The consultation document in relation to the proposal can be found on Blaenau Gwent's Council website. The link is here:

<https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/en/council/consultations/proposal-to-extend-the-capacity-at-pen-y-cwm-special-school/>

For ease of reference, the [consultation document](#) is electronically attached. If you require any further information or paper copies of the documents, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards,



Joanne Watts
Head of Education Resources & Planning
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council

SCHOOLS FAMILY ADVICE

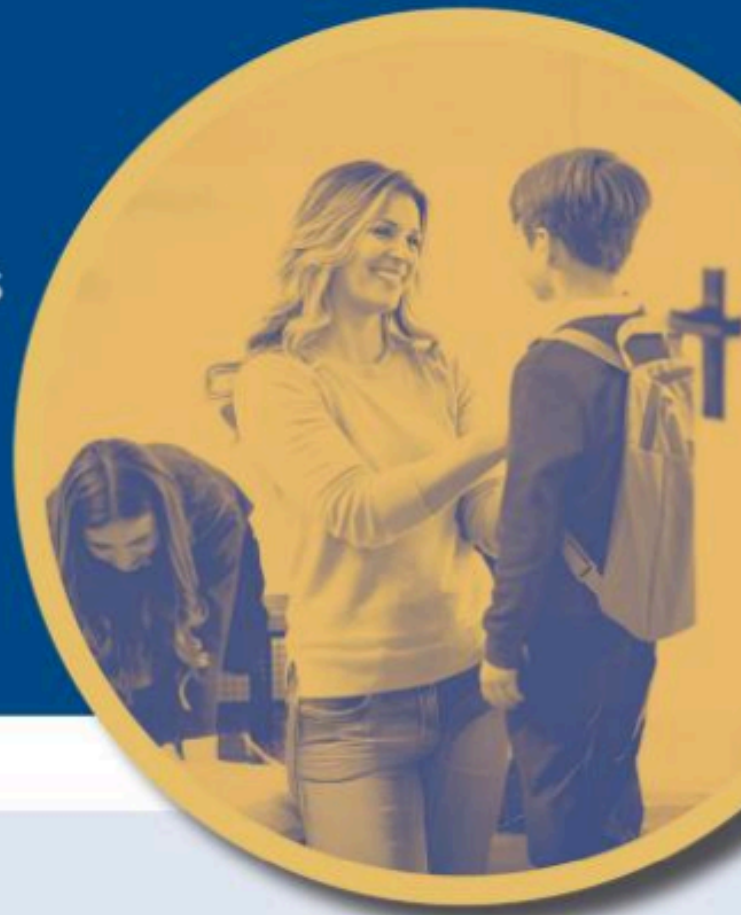
SOUTH WALES



Caerffili
Blaenau Gwent
Caerphilly
Blaenau Gwent

Citizens Advice
Caerphilly Blaenau
Gwent are here to help
to make life's challenges
easier to manage.

Our service is free,
confidential, and
focused on you.



We can help with:

- » Benefits
- » Debt and Money
- » Housing
- » Family
- » Work and
- » More...

**Find out more
about how we
can help you
find your way
forward inside
this leaflet**

BENEFITS - Commons issues

- » Difficulty applying for Universal Credit or understanding managed migration
- » Need help to make sense of a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) form
- » Been asked to attend a work-capability assessment
- » Not sure if you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to
- » Your returning to work and want to know how this will effect your current benefits

HOUSING

Commons issues

- » Facing eviction or you are at risk of homelessness
- » Living in poor conditions - damp or disrepair
- » Help with applying for social housing

FAMILY

Commons issues

- » Divorce or separation
- » Problems with child contact following a relationship breakdown
- » Understanding wills and inheritance

WORK

Common issues

- » Workplace disputes, time off difficulties
- » Discrimination after maternity leave
- » Understanding contracts, pay, leave, dismissal

CONSUMER

Commons issues

- » Victim of a scam or fraud
- » Faulty purchase
- » Issues with a second hand car
- » Rights when buying goods online

DEBT AND MONEY Common issues

- » Don't have enough money to pay your bills and afford essentials
- » Having trouble paying your rent or mortgage
- » Struggling to pay gas, electricity and water bills
- » Behind on Council Tax payments
- » Can't repay credit card bills or loans
- » Understanding different debt solutions available to you
- » Been contacted by debt collectors
- » Been overpaid benefits and being asked to pay it back

There are lots of ways to get in touch

The Schools Family Advice Service can provide a vast range of advice from support with DLA form completion, benefit appeals, the issue of food and fuel voucher (if appropriate) and advice on lots of life events like, divorce, debts, problems with landlords, problems at work and looking at how we can maximise your income. We attend a number of schools across Caerphilly & Blaenau Gwent and there are a number of ways to access support as follows:

AT SCHOOL

Speak to the school and see when we are there next and how to book.

DEDICATED BOOKING PAGE

Take a look at our dedicated schools [booking page](#) where you can book an appointment slot at your child's school confidentially. Just find your school page and click jump to the next available date.

TELEPHONE APPOINTMENT

Book a dedicated telephone appointment via this [link](#)

ENQUIRY FORM

Fill in this simple [form](#) and one of our team will call you to discuss your needs.

SEND AN EMAIL

If you have any questions email us at schools@cacbg.org.uk

VIRTUAL DROP IN

Take a look to see if we have a [video advice session](#) open

Scan the **WHITE QR code** to connect with one of our friendly advisers and ask for a telephone appointment



Follow us on our socials for info on our virtual drop-ins
f @citadvicecbg **ig** @advicecbg **in** @adviceCBG



National
Online
Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

12 Social Media Online Safety Tips FOR CHILDREN WITH NEW DEVICES

With Christmas only a few weeks away, many of you will be using social media to share your excitement with friends and family. Being active on social media is a great way to show others how much fun you're having, but it's important that you know how to use these apps safely and securely so that bad things don't happen. By following our safety tips below, you can make sure that your personal information stays private, your postings are positive and that your social media use overall is responsible, healthy and most of all enjoyable.

1

DON'T ACCEPT FRIEND REQUESTS FROM STRANGERS

Make sure that you set your profile to private so that people you don't know can't find you online. Always tell a trusted adult if a stranger or somebody you don't know sends you a message or a friend request.

2

NEVER SHARE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION WITH PEOPLE YOU DON'T KNOW

Keep your personal information personal. Sometimes people online aren't always who they say they are and might ask you to share things that you don't feel comfortable sharing.

3

DON'T SHARE EMBARRASSING PHOTOS OR VIDEOS OF OTHERS ONLINE

This could really upset them and could get you into a lot of trouble. Always think twice before posting anything on social media and treat people online as you would in real-life.

4

NEVER SEND NAKED PICTURES OF YOURSELF TO OTHERS

This is illegal if you are under 18 and you could get into trouble with the Police. If you are being pressured by someone, always say no and tell a trusted adult. Even if you think it is innocent fun, the photo could be shared with other people and you won't be able to control who else sees it.

5

CREATE A POSITIVE ONLINE REPUTATION

Always be kind and polite when posting comments on social media and only upload pictures and videos of things you are proud of. This forms part of your digital footprint. Everything you do online can be tracked and monitored and could affect what people think of you in real-life if it is negative.

6

LIMIT YOUR SCREEN TIME

Social media can be addictive, and it is easy to keep checking newsfeeds or your notifications every 5 minutes which can affect your behaviour and stop you from doing other things. Remember to only use your phone at certain times of the day, turn notifications off at bedtime and go out and have as fun as much as possible. This will keep you fit and healthy and make you appreciate there's more to life than just what's on social media.

7

BLOCK ONLINE BULLIES

Sometimes people might say nasty things to you online or post offensive comments on your pictures or videos. If this happens, always tell a trusted adult who will help you block them from your profile and support you in taking further action.

8

REPORT INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

If you see something on social media that you don't like, offends you or upsets you, you should always report it to a trusted adult. You should also report it to the social media app who will be able to remove the content if it is against their user policy and can block the person who posted it.

9

ONLY USE APPS WHICH YOU ARE OLD ENOUGH TO USE

Before downloading any new social media app, always check the age-rating. If you need help, ask your parent or carer to make sure that the app is safe for you to use and never download anything which you are too young for as it may contain content that isn't safe for you to see.

10

ALWAYS SECURE ALL YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES WITH A PASSWORD

This will help to keep your private information safe and won't allow others to access your profiles without your permission. Make sure your passwords are memorable and personal to you but something which other people can't guess, and always share them with your parents just in case you forget them.

11

ASK PARENTS TO SET-UP 'PARENTAL CONTROLS' FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

When you download a social media app, you should always ask a trusted adult to help you set it up for the first time. This will help you control who sees what you post, who can contact you and make sure you are able to enjoy using the app safely and securely.

12

ALWAYS TALK TO YOUR TRUSTED ADULT IF SOCIAL MEDIA IS MAKING YOU UNHAPPY

Sometimes, social media can make us feel bad about ourselves or sad that we aren't the same as someone else or doing the same things as someone else. Remember, if you ever feel this way, it's really important to talk to your trusted adult(s) like your parents, carers, other adult family members or a teacher, all of whom will be able to support you and discuss your feelings with you to help make you feel better.

From all the staff at
Ystruth Primary School

*Merry
Christmas*

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

