

Dear Parents and Carers

As we move further into the term, the school has been filled with excitement and preparation for our upcoming Christmas concerts. Pupils have been working hard in their music, drama, and class sessions to rehearse their performances, and they are looking forward to sharing their talents with you and our wider school community in December. Their enthusiasm and dedication are already shining through, and we are confident the concerts will be a wonderful celebration of their efforts.

In addition to these creative preparations, members of the school leadership team have recently met with our governors to provide updates on the progress being made across the school. These meetings help ensure that our priorities remain clear and that we continue to build on our strengths. Governors were updated on current achievements as well as the key areas we will be focusing on for further development over the coming months.

We continue to place a strong emphasis on raising attainment in reading and strengthening pupils' literacy skills across the school. These areas remain central to our improvement work, and any support you can offer at home—such as listening to your child read regularly or practising phonic sounds—would be greatly appreciated.

We look forward to seeing you on Wednesday for our Christmas concert at 5pm and cannot wait to invite last year's Year 11 to their celebration of success evening, where they will be presented with their GCSE certificates. The celebration evening starts at 6pm. Please ensure you tell families with children in Ysgol Afon Wen's previous year 11 as we want to see as many ex-pupils there as possible.

Key dates

Date	Event
Monday 1st December 2025	Year 11 Mock Exam week
Wednesday 3rd December 2025	Christmas Concert 5pm
Thursday 4th December 2025	GCSE Success evening 6pm (Yr 11 2024/5)
Monday 8th December 2025	Year 4, 5 & 6 Christmas show 2.15pm
Tuesday 9th December 2025	Year 4, 5 & 6 Christmas show 2.15pm
Wednesday 10th December 2025	Year 2 & 3 Christmas Show 9.15am
Thursday 11th December 2025	Reception & Year 1 Christmas Show 9.15am
Friday 12th December 2025	Nursery Show 9.15am & repeated at 11am
Tuesday 16th December 2025	Year 4, 5 & 6 Cinema Trip
Wednesday 17th December 2025	Year 7 & 8 Cinema Trip
Thursday 18th December 2025	Year 1 & 2 Christmas cinema on site Christmas Pantomime Year 3-7 Year 9 –11 Cinema trip
Friday 19th December 2025	Staff pantomime & end of term
Monday 5th January 2026	INSET DAY (school closed for pupils)
Tuesday 6th January 2026	Pupil return for Spring Term



Newsletter 28.11.25

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Celebration of Success

Congratulations to the following pupils who have been commended by their Progress leader or teachers. Well done!

Nursery	Lola-Daisy Jones & Luca Pittner	Year 4	Esmee Collins-Jayne & Harrison Davies	Year 9	Menna Leach & Shakeel Jackson-Ali
Reception	Damian Filippis & Mya Pritchard	Year 5	Bradley Davies & Josie Withers	Year 10	Lacey-Marie Reid & Jake Fisher
Year 1	Blake Oliver & Lili -Wen Evans	Year 6	Isaac Bailey & James Davies	Year 11	Sophie Shankland & Rougan Jones
Year 2	Chester Lucas & Megan Strange	Year 7	Luca Williams & Ava Fisher		
Year 3	Harry Gay & Harrison Davies	Year 8	Calon Cousins & Danny Betts		

New Extra Curricular activity

YAW Cheer Team

Y7/8 Wednesday lunch time 12:10 to 12:40 in the gymnasium. Hair up, bring extra bobbles. And have fun.








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Fresh Fruit Fridays—A new Home/School Initiative

We're excited to launch **Fresh Fruit Fridays**, a new project designed to promote healthy eating and family engagement. Pupils will prepare fruit salads during their cooking lessons and then take home a bag of fresh fruit on Friday to recreate the recipe with their families over the weekend.

Key Dates:

- **Week Commencing 1st December** – Advance Phase: Year 4A, 4B, 5B, and 6B
- **Friday 12th December** – Activate & Advance Phase: Year 1-3, 5A, and 6A

This initiative is supported by Tesco Stronger Starts funding, enabling us to provide free ingredients for families. We hope you'll enjoy making fruit salads together and share your pictures with us!

Please help us by completing a short pre-questionnaire. Scan or screenshot (and open in your gallery app) the QR code below to access the Google Form. Your feedback will help us make this project even better!



<https://forms.gle/fdzHZ2f4jvZr8TVH8>



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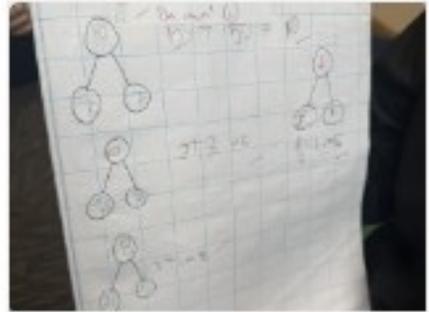
FRESH FRUIT FRIDAYS

A new home & school initiative



Week Commencing 1st December – Advance Phase: Year 4A, 4B, 5B, and 6B
Friday 12th December – Activate & Advance Phase: Year 1-3, 5A, and 6A
Learn how to make fruit salad in class →
Take all the ingredients home for FREE →
Share your pictures with us.

Celebrating Pupil Voice across Ysgol Afon Wen



This week, pupils across all year groups engaged enthusiastically in our pupil voice activities, sharing both their proudest achievements and the challenges they have overcome in their learning journeys. It has been inspiring to see the confidence and reflection demonstrated by our learners as they discussed their work.

Particularly enlightening were the contributions from our Year 1 pupils. Despite their young age, they explained what they have been learning and described how their teachers have supported them every step of the way.

Our pupils' ability to express their understanding and the strategies that helped them overcome difficulties truly highlights the nurturing and inclusive environment we strive to create at Ysgol Afon Wen.

These activities not only celebrate pupil success but also provide valuable insights into how our teaching approaches impact learning. They help us ensure that our curriculum and support systems continue to activate learning, advance curiosity, and achieve success for every pupil, in line with our Triple-A Promise.

We look forward to continuing to listen to our pupils' voices as we work together to make learning an exciting and rewarding adventure for all.

Year 3-7 School Trip

Last chance for Y3-Y7 students to sign up for the School Trip for Little Mermaid. Payments need to be submitted to the RCT portal by midday on 01.12.25.



School Lane, Hawthorn, Pontypridd CF37 5AL
Telephone : 01443 841228
Headteacher : Mrs C Crockett

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are delighted to inform you that Year 3-7 learners from Ysgol Afon Wen will be attending a pantomime performance of *The Little Mermaid* at Tylorstown Welfare Hall on Thursday 18th December.

This promises to be a fun and festive experience for our learners as we approach the Christmas term.

Key Information:

- Venue: Tylorstown Welfare Hall
- Departure Time: 12.00pm
- Lunch: Learners will have an early packed lunch provided by the school at 11.30am before departing
- Performance Duration: Approximately 2 hours
- Cost: £12 per learner

We kindly ask that payment of £12 be made by Monday 1st December, via the Ysgol Afon Wen payment link on the RCT website.

Please also complete the attached consent form via QR code below:



Please ensure your child wears their school uniform and brings a coat suitable for the weather, as we will be walking between the buses and the venue.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours faithfully,

Ms J Cobb



Assistant Headteacher

SCRIPT KINDLY REPHRASED IN AGREEMENT WITH ALEXJACKSONPANTOMIMES.COM

PONTYPRIDD THEATRE COMPANY PROUDLY PRESENTS

A MAGICAL PANTOMIME **THE LITTLE MERMAID** SCRIPT BY ALEX JACKSON

THURSDAY 18TH & FRIDAY 19TH OF DECEMBER : 7.00pm
SATURDAY 20TH 10.00am

TICKETS: ADULTS: £11
CHILD UNDER 11 & CONCESSIONS: 60+ : £6
PARENT TICKET: £35
*On Arrival @ Tylorstown Welfare Hall, on 1st Dec @ 11.30am bring 10

TYLORSTOWN WELFARE HALL

Purchase tickets - www.ticketsource.co.uk
Tylorstown Box Office
Group bookings email drk_wltrs@yahoo.co.uk

Flanked by Wodi ei arswan.com UK Government Llywodraeth y DU



Celebrating Pupil Voice across Ysgol Afon Wen

This week, some of our Year 7 pupils embarked on an exciting advertising project in their English lessons, exploring how advertisers use persuasive techniques to influence consumers. Working collaboratively, the pupils created their own radio adverts, learning to craft compelling messages designed to convince listeners to buy products.



In a particularly memorable moment, the girls in the picture successfully persuaded Mrs Stephens to consider purchasing a chocolate teapot—an amusing yet effective demonstration of their persuasive skills! This hands-on project not only deepened pupils' understanding of language and communication but also encouraged creativity, teamwork, and critical thinking.

This project aligns closely with the Welsh Curriculum's emphasis on developing literacy and communication skills in real-world contexts. It also supports the curriculum's focus on the four purposes, particularly preparing pupils to be ambitious, capable learners and enterprising, creative contributors.

Moreover, the advertising project offers valuable insights into careers in marketing, media, and communications, linking classroom learning with the world of work. Pupils gained practical experience in skills such as collaboration, problem-solving, and audience awareness, which are essential for future career success.

We look forward to seeing how our pupils continue to develop these important skills through engaging and meaningful learning experiences.



YAW Lead Learners Shine at County Youth Forum



On Tuesday, 25th November, three of Ysgol Afon Wen's outstanding Lead Learners – Leo, Nmesoma, and Tehila – proudly represented our school at the County Youth Forum held at the Council Chambers, Llys Cadwyn, Pontypridd. This important event brought together young people from across the county to share their views, influence decision-making, and learn more about local democracy.

The forum provided a unique opportunity for students to engage with key issues affecting schools and communities. The main topic for discussion was Healthy Eating in Schools, a subject chosen from the Education Scrutiny Committee's work programme. Representatives from council departments and the Cabinet Member for Education were present to listen and record the voices of young people.

Our learners demonstrated exceptional leadership and communication skills throughout the day. They participated in a mock council meeting, explored how RCTCBC operates, and contributed thoughtful ideas during the healthy eating debate. Their preparation and confidence were evident, reflecting the values of the Afon Wen Way.

A special mention goes to Tehila, whose eloquence and clarity during discussions impressed the organisers so much that she was invited to chair part of the meeting – a remarkable achievement that highlights her leadership potential.



Leo and Nmesoma also played a key role, ensuring that Ysgol Afon Wen's perspective was heard and respected. Their contributions showcased not only their commitment to improving school life but also their understanding of how young voices can shape policy.

We are incredibly proud of these learners for representing our school with such maturity and enthusiasm. Experiences like this empower students to become active citizens and strengthen the link between schools and the wider community.

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Interim reports

Year 10 pupils received their interim reports last week. These play an important role in supporting their progress as they move further into their GCSE courses. The interim report provides an early indication of how pupils are engaging with their GCSE subjects, highlighting both their strengths and any areas where further focus may be needed.

These reports help pupils reflect on their current effort, behaviour, attitude to learning and attainment, and they give families valuable insight into how best to support learning at home. They also allow teachers to identify where additional guidance, intervention, or challenge may be beneficial as pupils begin to deepen their understanding of exam content.

We encourage you to review the report with your child and discuss any next steps so that they can continue to make strong progress throughout the year. If you have any questions or would like to speak with a member of staff, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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Achieve

November 2025

Dear Parent/Carer,

Please find attached your child's progress report for the Autumn Term. This report reviews current academic expectation as well as attitude to learning in all subjects.

The information below will help you as parents/carers to understand the contents of your child's Report.

Grade	Subject reports indicate an attainment grade A, B, C, D, E or U corresponding to the grades awarded at GCSE Level. Vocational subjects are graded 'Distinction', 'Distinction Merit', 'Pass' or 'U'. Please note the grades contained in this report represent current performance and are not an indication of predicted grades.
Effort	The Attitude to Learning section in each subject report uses the categories below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent • Good • Adequate • Unsatisfactory

WNT Age-standardised score

The Welsh National Tests produce an age-standardised score scale. An age-standardised score of 100 is an average test score.

Welsh National Test Scores	Summer 2025 Score
WNT Reading	
WNT Procedural Mathematics	
WNT Reasoning Mathematics	

(* - Score below range / NP - Pupil was **Not Present** for the assessment)

If you have any additional questions, please contact Miss H Boyce (Year 10 Progress Leader) via phone requesting a call back (**01443 841228**).

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to working together to ensure your child reaches their full potential.

Mr D Jones
Achieve Phase Leader

Child Protection



YSGOL AFON WEN SAFEGUARDING TEAM
'Safeguarding is Everybody's Business'



Mrs Gwyn
Senior Deputy Headteacher
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mrs Natale-Vaughan
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead / CLA and YC Lead



Mr Dwight
Assistant Headteacher
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mrs Rowland
Safeguarding Support Activate



Mrs Walters
Safeguarding Support Activate



Mrs Geach
Safeguarding Support Advance



Mrs O'Carroll
Safeguarding Support Advance

Trained Level 3 / Group C Staff:
Mrs Crockett – Headteacher
Mrs Brewer – Deputy Headteacher
Mr Cobb – Assistant Headteacher
Governor Link for Safeguarding – Mrs Cook

Contact emails for key staff:
Mrs Rowland (Activate Progress Leader Nursery – Y3) - Nicola.Rowland@ysgolafonwen.rctcbc.cymru
Mrs Geach (Progress Leader for Yrs 4-6) - Vicky.Geach@ysgolafonwen.rctcbc.cymru
Mrs O'Carroll (Lead for Advance Phase Y4 – Y8) – Clare.OCarroll@ysgolafonwen.rctcbc.cymru
Mr Jones (Lead for Achieve Phase Y9 – Y11) - Dustyn.Jones@ysgolafonwen.rctcbc.cymru



Wellbeing spotlight



SPOTLIGHT ON
SELF - HARM



Understanding self-harm is crucial for parents/carers to support their children effectively; it involves recognising signs, communicating openly, and seeking professional help when necessary.

Understanding Self-Harm
Self-harm is a complex behaviour where individuals intentionally hurt themselves to cope with overwhelming emotions or distress. It can manifest in various forms, such as cutting, burning, or hitting oneself. Importantly, self-harm is distinct from suicidal behaviour, although it can be a risk factor for suicide. Many young people self-harm as a way to express emotional pain or to feel something when they are numb.

Signs of Self-Harm
Parents/Carers should be vigilant for signs that may indicate self-harm, including:

- Unexplained cuts, burns, or scars, often in areas like wrists or thighs.
- Wearing long sleeves or pants even in warm weather to cover injuries.
- Frequent isolation or withdrawal from friends and family.
- Expressing feelings of worthlessness or intense emotional pain.



Communicating with Your Child

If you suspect your child is self-harming, it's essential to approach the topic with empathy and without judgment. Here are some tips for effective communication:

Start the Conversation: Address the issue as soon as possible. Use open-ended questions like, "Can you help me understand what you're feeling?" to invite dialogue without putting them on the defensive.

Listen Actively: Show empathy and curiosity about their feelings. Sometimes, they may just want someone to listen rather than seeking solutions.

Reassure of Your Support: Let them know you love them and that they are not in trouble. This reassurance can help them feel safe to open up

Online Support

Apps  [calm harm - Search](#)
[self-healapp.co.uk](#)

Websites  
Young Minds - Young People and Parents / Carers


Self-harm (Advice for young people) Get help
Self-harm is when you intentionally harm yourself as a way of dealing with difficult feelings or experiences. Find out about self-harm and how to get help.

Face to Face Support

 Please contact your child's Progress Leader / member of the Safeguarding Team at YAW who will be happy to support and signpost if needed

You are not alone

Uniform Swap Shop



Uniform Swap Shop

Friday 5th
December
@2.45pm
Theatre



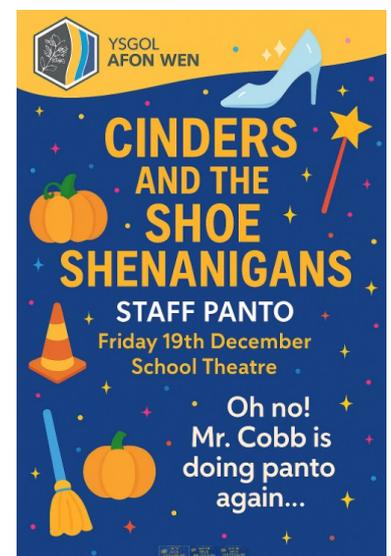
Please come along to help yourself, free of charge, to the uniform donated from member of the Ysgol Afon Wen community. You do not need to have anything to swap at this time. Once your child has grown out of the clothes you can donate them again.

If you have any uniform donations prior to this event, please bring them to reception. Thank you so much for all of the support with this event this academic year, we have had to buy new rails for the amount of donations!

Jolly Jumper Day

Pupils will be invited to wear a jolly jumper on the last day of term—Friday 19th December, in readiness for the staff Christmas Panto.

In addition to school uniform, the swap shop will also be collecting **Christmas jumpers for recycling**. If your child has outgrown their Christmas jumper, or you simply wish to pass one on, these donations will be gratefully received and made available for other families.





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Attendance Advent

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**ATTENDANCE
ADVENT**

1 PRESENT	2 PRESENT	3 PRESENT	4 PRESENT
5 PRESENT	6	7	8 PRESENT
9 PRESENT	10 PRESENT	11 PRESENT	12 PRESENT
13	14	15 PRESENT	16 PRESENT
17 PRESENT	18 PRESENT	19 PRESENT	Daily Presents when you're Present! * Weekly 'Full House' Rewards * 100% Rewards
EVERY CHILD, EVERY DAY POB PLENTYN, POB DYDD			

As we look ahead to December 1st on Monday, we are excited to launch our YAW Attendance Advent!

There will be lots of opportunities to win daily and weekly prizes during the last three weeks of term. All pupils who attend school for the 15 school days in December will also be entered to our GRAND DRAW, which will be drawn on Friday 19th December.

As always, we strongly encourage all pupils to attend school every day, and for parents/carers to support us in our aim. The next 3 weeks will be jam-packed with exciting and valuable learning opportunities, as well as our annual festivities - including well deserved end of term Rewards Trips, fantastic Christmas Shows, our amazing Staff Panto and Jolly Jumper Day. We are looking forward to 15 busy and exciting days!





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Ysgol Afon Wen Christmas Charity Appeals 2025

This festive season, we are proud to support **two important charity appeals** that will make a real difference to families and individuals in need:

Shelter Cymru and the RCT Santa Appeal (Sion Corn).



RCT Santa Appeal – Gifts for Local Children

We are also supporting the **Sion Corn Appeal**, which provides gifts for children and young people across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Deadline for gifts: Friday, 13th December

Important: Gifts must be **brand new and unwrapped**.

Here are the children we have pledged to support:

- Paige (F, 12)
- Patricia (F, 11)
- Phoebe (F, 11)
- Libby (F, infant)
- Ffion (F, 14)
- Frank (M, infant)
- Kiara (F, 15)
- Maisey (F, 15)
- Lucus (M, 17)
- Dylan (M, infant)

If you would like to donate, please choose an age-appropriate gift for any of the children listed above.





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Ysgol Afon Wen Christmas Charity Appeals 2025

We are collecting donations to support local homeless shelters and give those in need a warmer, happier Christmas. Every contribution helps someone feel cared for and valued.

Deadline for donations: Friday, 5th December

What can you donate?

- **Toys:** Barbie dolls, toy cars, colouring pens/books, play sets, teddy bears (clean), and any good-condition toys.
- **Other items:**
 - Blankets, bedding
 - Stationery, educational and reading books
 - Warm clothing (gloves, hats, scarves)
 - Toiletries (including toothpaste and sanitary products)
 - Hygiene and skincare items
 - Hair accessories (unused), hairbrushes (unused)
 - Night lights (brand new), Christmas decorations
 - DVDs (working and undamaged)

Please note: We cannot accept food donations for this year's appeals.

Collection details:

- **Students will be manning a collection station every morning and evening this week during drop-off and collection.**
- **Upper Advance and Achieve students** can deliver their gifts **before school at Pupil Reception**, as well as **during break and lunch.**

Thank you for your generosity and kindness. Together, we can make this Christmas brighter for those who need it most.



Christmas Dinner

Our annual Christmas dinner will take place on **Wednesday, 10th December** for all pupils at Ysgol Afon Wen. In order to support the catering team with their preparations, **pre-ordering is essential** so that appropriate quantities can be arranged.

Please note that **no alternative cooked meal options will be available** on this day. If you would like your child to have the Christmas dinner, kindly complete the Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/D8R2RSTz3E8P2Dtx5>

Thank you for your cooperation.



Santa and his reindeer



We are delighted to share some very special news... Word has reached us that **Santa and his reindeer will once again be making a magical stop at Ysgol Afon Wen this year**. Their sleigh will be visiting all pupils from Nursery through to Year 6, bringing a touch of Christmas wonder to the school.

We can't wait for the excitement to unfold!





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Staff Pantomime

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CINDERS AND THE SHOE SHENANIGANS

STAFF PANTO

Friday 19th December
School Theatre

Mrs Gwyn really
wanted to be
the Coach Driver...

Mrs Brewer wanted
to be Cinderella

Find out about Mr Dwight
and his quest to become... 



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Carol Concert

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CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT

Wednesday, 3rd December 2025
at 5:00pm

£3 entry - including
raffle ticket and program



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Community events

Mynediad i'r Amgueddfa



Entrance to Museum

Siôn Corn



Father Christmas

Pontypridd Town Council will host Santa's Grotto at Pontypridd Museum on three Saturdays leading up to Christmas - **6th Dec, 13th Dec and 20th Dec.**

We understand that those with ALN may miss out on events like this due to busy crowds, unknown faces and sensory overload. The town council team are offering six, **5-minute slots** on all three mornings between **10:15-10:45am**, whereby ALN families can meet Father Christmas in our Grotto. This way, there will be no crowds, no queuing (or at least a very short queue with no more than one family waiting before you) and a calmer, quieter atmosphere.

We open to the general public at **11am**.

The grotto is wheelchair accessible.

I have included photos of the entrance to the museum and Father Christmas himself. The Grotto is yet to be built but if you would like photos of the Grotto and waiting area prior to your visit, do let us know.

If you would like to book one of the eighteen 5-minute slots or have any questions, please telephone the Town Council/Museum on **01443 490740** between 9:30am-4:30pm Mon-Fri, 10:00am-4:00pm Saturday or email info@pontypriddtowncouncil.gov.uk.

These slots are available on a first come first served basis.

We are working towards becoming as inclusive as possible and really value your feedback/advice.



Christmas

CRAFT FAYRE

SANTA'S GROTTTO

29
NOV

. stalls . home produce .
. games . grand raffle .
. refreshments .
and lots more!

12:00
PM

contact: mail@bethelbaptisthawthorn.org

