



Vale School Governors' Association Cymdeithas Llywodraethwyr Ysgolion y Fro and Governor Support Unit Newsletter

Note from the Chair

These are worrying times for schools in Wales. Welsh Government has not allocated enough money to fund the effects of the rise in the cost of living and the increases in staff salaries.

Many schools have set deficit budgets for 2023-24 financial year. In the Vale, we estimate almost half the schools will be in that situation. More, perhaps most schools in Wales will be posting deficit budgets for 2024-25. The impacts on children in Welsh Schools are grave:

- Reduction in the quality of learning & teaching
- Fewer teachers – either through non-replacement or redundancies. Insufficient support staff, meaning that children with Additional Learning Needs are at risk of not receiving the help they need.
- Fewer adults in classrooms, at lunchtime and breaks, putting everyone at risk.
- Less maintenance on buildings leading to safety concerns
- Increased stress on Headteachers and Senior staff, leading to greater sickness absence and burn-out.

And at the same time schools are struggling to implement educational reforms.

The Vale Governors Association is working on two fronts:

1. In conjunction with other Local Authority Governor Associations throughout Wales we have launched a Senedd petition with aim of triggering a Senedd debate on school funding. Please sign up and encourage the parents/ guardians at your school to do the same. We need 10,000 signatures at <https://petitions.senedd.wales/petitions/245492>
2. The Vale of Glamorgan has been penalised by the Welsh Government funding formula for Education for more than twenty years. Currently each Vale pupil is worth £728 per annum less than the Welsh average – more than 10%. This is despite the Vale Council allocating more to Education than the formula suggests. VSGA is taking legal advice as to whether a judicial review is possible. Thank you to all the Governing Bodies who contributed financially towards this campaign.

I will keep Governors posted about how things progress.

Dr Martin Price
Chair of VSGA and Vice-Chair of Governors, St Richard Gwyn Roman Catholic High School, Barry

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Special points of interest:

- AVAGO was formed in 1996 and re-launched in 2006 as Vale School Governors' Association (VSGA)
- The Management Committee is made up of 15 elected governors together with 2 elected parent governor representatives

VSGA was set up to:

- Promote best practice in governance in schools within the Vale of Glamorgan LEA
- To promote partnership amongst schools and between schools and the LEA
- To work with stakeholders to ensure adequate resources for schools within the LEA
- To represent the Association's views on issues relating to school governance and the management and resourcing of schools to relevant authorities and organisations

In association with the Vale of Glamorgan Council's Governor Support Unit

Contact Details:

John Sparks

Head of Governor Support

Tel: 01446 709106 Fax: 01446 701820

Email: JSparks@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

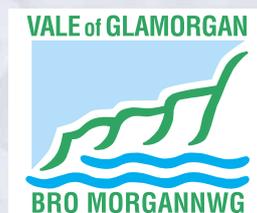
Janine Hoare

Governor Support

Administrator

Tel: 01446 709107 Fax: 01446 701820

Email: JHoare@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk



VSGA has an email address that you may contact us on.

It's VSGA@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

alternatively you can contact VSGA by post at:

VSGA Governor Support Unit
Learning & Development Dept.
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Civic Offices, Holton Road,
Barry CF63 4RU

Information for Schools

The whole of the education workforce - teaching and all non-teaching staff - can access Welsh language courses **free of charge** and we offer courses at all learning levels. There is also a wide range of learning methods available for you to learn in a way that's convenient to you.

Free Welsh Courses



dysgucymraeg.cymru
learnwelsh.cymru
Y Fro / The Vale

Do you have staff who would benefit from this and gain confidence to teach in Welsh?

Free Courses are suitable for:

- Qualified teachers in, or searching for, employment.
- Newly qualified teachers searching for employment.
- Supply teachers.
- Individuals currently training to be a qualified teacher.
- Teaching Assistants currently in employment.
- Leaders.
- Advisory teachers.
- Non-teaching staff e.g. lunch and yard staff.

Learn Welsh Levels

Courses are available at different levels from beginners to experienced learners:

Entry: Beginner level - introduces basic language patterns, including present, past and future tenses, and everyday words and phrases.

Foundation: If you have a basic understanding of Welsh and are confident using present, past and future tenses, then try this level. You'll get to discuss everyday subjects such as friends, family, work and hobbies.

Intermediate: This level is for those who are familiar with the key language patterns of Welsh. You'll enjoy developing your speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills and you will enhance your vocabulary significantly.

Advanced: Here the focus is on developing your spoken Welsh. You'll also get to improve your reading, writing, and listening skills, and learn more about Wales.

Proficient: This level is for fluent learners and Welsh speakers who wish to build confidence to use and enjoy their language skills. The course is tailored to meet the particular needs of each class.

You can see the choices on our website www.learnwelsh.cymru/thevale.

Enrol then use ADDYSG23 to get the course for free or email us on learnwelsh@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk for more information.

Suzanne Condon

Business Administrator, Welsh for Adults – Gweinyddwr Busnes Cymraeg i Oedolion Learning and Skills- Sgiliau a Dysgu

School Uniform Guidance

Please see below which is a follow-up to the recently published school uniform guidance.

Revised guidance for governing bodies on school uniform and appearance policies was published on 2 May 2023.

The new guidance states that schools should ensure that arrangements are in place so that second-hand school uniforms are available for parents and carers to acquire.

Uniform recycling and exchange schemes can vary. Here is a link to some different types of schemes schools could choose to operate.

<https://www.gov.wales/school-uniform-exchange-and-recycling-schemes>

Claire Horton

Head of Legislation & Governance Branch/Pennaeth y Gangen Deddfwriaeth a Llywodraethu
claire.horton2@gov.wales/claire.horton2@llyw.cymru

Co-ordinated Admission Arrangements 2023

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has operated co-ordinated admission arrangements for the Primary School Admissions process since a pilot scheme was initiated for the 2019-20 reception intake.

The governing bodies of Llansannor C.W Primary, St Andrew's Major C.W Primary, St Brides Major C.W Primary, St David's C.W Primary, St Joseph's R.C Primary and Wick & Marcross C.W Primary and for the 2023-24 intake, All Saints C.W Primary have agreed to become part of the co-ordinated arrangements and it is hoped that the remaining schools not currently involved, will recognise the benefits and look to join in the future which will provide greater transparency to all involved.

The 2021-22 Secondary School Admissions process also saw the governing body of St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School become part of the co-ordinated admission arrangements.

The co-ordinated arrangements do not in any way impact on the application of individual schools or council admissions policies. It is purely an administrative exercise that has helped us to understand the benefits of coordinated admissions, particularly as a way of supporting families to secure their first preference for a school place and avoiding the distress caused to parents by delayed offers and unnecessary appeals.

By working collaboratively on the coordinated school admissions, this has resulted in a greater number of pupils securing a place in the first round of allocations and reduced the number of families that would previously have had to wait some considerable time for an offer of a place or an appeal hearing. It is hoped that in future years we will see the remaining faith schools within the Vale of Glamorgan join the co-ordinated arrangements in order to provide enhanced transparency for parents and pupils and also increased planning and organisation for both schools and the local authority.

Sam Mawhinney

Logistics & Access Officer/Swyddog Logisteg a Mynediad
Strategy, Community Learning Resources/ Strategaeth, Adnoddau Dysgu Cymunedol

Children in Wales – Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education; Governors' Guides

We know that 4 in 10 of our children and young people in Wales are living in poverty, which affects their daily lives, education and future life opportunities. The impact of poverty on learners from lower income families is well documented and affects wellbeing and attainment. The associated costs of the school day can exacerbate this and practical day to day school life can become problematic.

Our successful Price of Pupil Poverty Guides, designed for schools and addressing five key areas (**Understanding Poverty; School Uniform and Clothing; Food and Hunger; Participation in the life of the School; Home-School Relationship**) have been developed into a new School Governors' Guide.

Written specifically for Governors, this guide provides an insight into each of the five key areas of the Guides from a Governor perspective and also looks at school policies, Welsh Government funding and projects to tackle poverty in schools.

Join Children in Wales for a **FREE awareness and information webinar** on the new **Governors' Guide to Tackling the Impact of Poverty on Education**, which will introduce the new guide and provide practical support and advice on removing financial barriers to pupil participation. As a governor, you can support your school to tackle the impact of poverty on the school day for all learners.

Find out more here:

Governors' Guides/Canllaw i Lywodraethwyr|Children in Wales
(childreninwalesmembership.org.uk)

Michelle Calnan

Education, Social Justice and Welsh Language Group/ Y Grŵp Addysg, Cyfiawnder
Cymdeithasol a'r Gymraeg
Welsh Government / Llywodraeth Cymru

Supporting the Period Dignity Initiative!

The Vale of Glamorgan has been playing a key role in delivering the Welsh Government's Period Dignity initiative ensuring all learners in the county have access to free period products. At its core the initiative seeks to challenge the stigmas and taboos around periods. By encouraging more conversations, pupils will better understand periods, what is normal and where to seek help. Pupils can request free period products, which are delivered to them in a practical and dignified way. Whilst the scheme is open to all, there has been particular focus on promoting it to lower income households and vulnerable students.

The Welsh Government requires that a minimum of 80% of funding is spent on eco-friendly products, and as such, there has been an emphasis on promoting reusable products where possible. We currently stock :-

- Reusable pads
- Reusable pants
- Menstrual cups
- Pantyliners
- Pads – Medium/Super
- Non Applicator Tampons – Regular/Super
- Applicator Tampons – Regular/Super

We have nurtured good relationships with the following companies who all have eco friendly credentials or small carbon footprints:-

- TOTM
- Grace & Green
- Hey Girls
- Natracare
- Femme Tasse
- Cheeky Pants

We have employed a teacher to undertake sessions within all Schools, focusing on Primary Schools in the first instance, which highlight to pupils everything surrounding periods, cycles, use of products etc. Since January 2023 we have undertaken sessions within 95% of the Primary Schools in the Vale. Each pupil who attends these sessions will be given a free bag of products to take home.

The Vale of Glamorgan PPE team have been helping to administer the initiative by making up and delivering product bags to all of the Schools who have undergone sessions as well as the majority of Secondary Schools who have requested bags for year groups – with one school requesting 1000 bags! We have also supplied Atlantic College

Pupils can also access free period products by visiting:

<https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/schools/Period-Dignity.aspx>

or emailing perioddignity@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk They will need to provide their name, school, year group and address in order to ensure we can respond as quickly as possible with a delivery to their home address.

Period Dignity Outlets/Collection Points

We also make deliveries to some of the 56 Period Dignity Outlets, with the numbers of outlets increasing all the time due to need and word of Mouth. We currently have the following outlets registered as per below:

Council Buildings

- Civic Offices
- Flying Start Family Centre
- Flying Start Building
- Hen Goleg Day Centre

Libraries

- Barry Library
- Llantwit Library
- Cowbridge Library
- Penarth Library
- Rhoose Library
- St Athan Library
- Wenvoe Library Sully Library

Leisure Centres

- Barry Leisure Centre
- Penarth Leisure Centre
- Llantwit Leisure Centre
- Cowbridge Leisure Centre

Housing/Hostels

- Golau - Hafod
- Ty John Rowley
- Ty A Fro
- Ty Newydd
- Ty Dylan
- Ty Iolo
- POBL Floating Support

Food Banks

- Food Pod Penarth
- Foodshare/CF61
- The Food Pantry – Margaret Alexander Community Centre
- Vale foodbank @ The Gathering Place
- Vale foodbank @ Bethel Baptist Church
- Vale foodbank @ Bethesda Chapel
- Vale foodbank @ Hope Church
- Vale foodbank @ Coastlands Family Church
- Vale foodbank @ St. Mary's Church

Other Venues

- Cadogs Corner - Victoria Park
- A Class Apart
- Head 2 Toe Beauty Salon
- Cardio Core Fitness
- Waterfront Medical Centre
- Ruck café
- The Hub

Pick & Mix Dispensers

We are also trialling 'Pick & Mix' Sanitary Dispenser which will allow members of the public to take sanitary items when they need them without having to ask specifically for them.

We currently have 3 units based within the Reception area of the Civic Offices in Barry, Golau Caredig (on Broad Street) and in Pencoedtre High School. The feedback so far from these units has been very positive and highlights the need for products. If these are successful then we will look to roll these dispensers out to further settings in the future.

Supporting Websites

- The Welsh Government has a Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan which can be found here: <https://www.gov.wales/period-dignity-strategic-action-plan-html>
- Bloody Brilliant website: <https://bloodybrilliant.wales/>

For more information contact:

Laura Ellis – Prevention & Partnership Administrator – LPEllis@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Mark Davies – Prevention & Partnership Manager – MDDavies@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Lisa Lewis – OM Strategy & Resources – Lewis@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Laura Ellis

Prevention & Partnership Administrator / Gweinyddydd Partneriaeth Plant a Phobl Ifanc
ALN and Wellbeing / Gwella Ysgolion a Chynhwysiant



School Governors Compliance duties

Meet our Team

Geoff Twigg, Corporate Compliance Manager – tel: 029 20673010
GLTwigg@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Andrew Treweek, Operational Manager Building Services – tel: 02920 673036
atreweek@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Using our in-house expertise, or securing specialist contractors, we can take the worry out of your building compliance responsibilities in schools and other public buildings.

The Corporate Compliance Team undertake initial site visits in respect of building compliance to establish your compliance needs, whether statutory or recommended.

Building maintenance and management forms a critical part of the day to day activity in all our schools and there is a clear responsibility on managers and senior members of staff to ensure building systems and installations are safe to use. Failure to complete the relevant compliance checks and inspections can have serious consequences and the HSE would look to prosecute and even imprison where the failings are significant. To support headteachers and governing bodies, the Council has a Corporate Compliance team in place to audit building compliance within schools. There are limitations on the activities this team can achieve, however they are available to offer guidance to schools in order to support you in meeting the responsibilities both headteachers and governors hold.

To this assist in meeting your responsibilities as a governing body, it is recommended that you have a regular agenda item for your Premises Committee to review building compliance and check on the following:

	Service area	Inspection output	Observations/actions	Activity	Possible Governance Actions
	Gas Installations	Pass/fail	Engineer will reduce significant risk by isolating the gas system.	Annual	Check service and inspection completed
Electrical	Fixed Electrical installations	Graded Failure	Failings and faults within the installation are coded/graded from urgent/immediate fix and parts of the system may be shut down, whilst other minor faults are identified and do not require immediate attention.	Three/five yearly	Check inspection report has been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion
	Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)	Pass/fail	Failed items should be rendered unusable at the time of inspection and the site manager should remove and	Biennial	Check equipment has inspection tag/sticker and is no older than

	Service area	Inspection output	Observations/actions	Activity	Possible Governance Actions
			replace the appliance. Generally, there is no inventory available to check all appliances have been tested but all equipment visible should be appropriately labelled.		2 years
	Emergency Lighting	Graded Failure	Failings and faults identified within the installation are graded from urgent/ immediate fix to recommend to meet current code.	Biannual	Check inspection report has been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion
	Stage Lighting	Graded Failure	Failings and faults identified within the installation are graded from urgent/ immediate fix to recommend to meet current code	Annually	Check inspection report has been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion
Fire	Fire Risk Assessments (H&S Function)	RAG	The survey will identify both physical building improvement and housekeeping requirements.to demonstrate housekeeping activity, a signed record of daily, weekly, monthly, etc. activity should be kept	Three/five yearly	Check inspection report has been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion. Al so check fire, doors are kept shut and close properly.
	Fire detection system	Graded Failure	There will be a range of building and management actions which need to be addressed and will include cyclical servicing of the installation, regular maintenance and weekly recorded checks as well as	Annually / Weekly	Check inspection report has been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion

	Service area	Inspection output	Observations/actions	Activity	Possible Governance Actions
			remediation to the installation.		
	Fire Fighting Equipment	Pass/Fail	Failed equipment should be removed from site by the inspecting engineer and replacements discussed with the site manager.	Annual	Check inspection report has been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion
	Sprinklers	Pass/Fail	Sprinkler heads will be recorded as a failure and the inspection record will provide a fail. Failure will be recorded as an outstanding certificate.	Annual	Check inspection report has been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion
	Dry Risers	Pass/Fail	Dry risers will be recorded as a failure and the inspection record will provide a fail. Failure will be recorded as an outstanding certificate. Wet riser faults are more likely to leak into the building and site managers will have possibly noticed and taken action (two buildings only)	Annual	Check inspection report has been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion
Micro Biological	Asbestos	RAG Based Assessment	Asbestos products identified by non-intrusive inspection are recorded and monitored during annual inspection. Any works undertaken should update the management plan	Annually	Ensure a Refurbishment and Demolition survey is completed before instructing any modifications to the school (Not applicable in newer schools)
	Legionella	RAG Based Recommendation	There will be a range of building and management actions	Annually / Weekly	Check inspection report has

	Service area	Inspection output	Observations/actions	Activity	Possible Governance Actions
			which need to be addressed and will include cyclical servicing of the installation, regular maintenance and weekly recorded checks as well as remediation to the installation.		been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion. Also check regular testing of tap temperature and running little used outlets is recorded weekly (even during school holidays)
Other	Lifts	Graded Failure	Insurance assessor will provide recommendations and timescale for remediation against each. Recommendations could range from immediate lift isolation to longer term maintenance.	Quarterly	Check inspection report has been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion
	Lightening Conductors	Pass/Fail	Certificate issued with recommendations for effective grounding during a lightning strike.		Check inspection report has been issued and any remedial works are planned for completion

The Corporate Compliance team keep a check on all certificates and notify your school when these are about to expire. They will also contact the Headteacher in relation to outstanding certification where it has not been received. It is relevant to note that where recommendations for work has been made to remedy defects at the time of the inspection, the Corporate Compliance team are unable to determine if this has been resolved or planned for remedy. You are therefore advised to satisfy yourself that the appropriate course of action is being taken and that sufficient budget is being made available to keep the school safe.

The checks covered by the Corporate Compliance Team does not cover some apparatus not forming part of the building such as, play equipment, trees, portable hoists, etc and you may also want to add these to your check list.

Lisa Lewis

Operational Manager, Strategy and Resources/Rheolwr Gweithredol, Strategaeth ac Adnoddau Strategy, Community Learning and Resources/ Strategaeth, Adnoddau Dysgu Cymunedol

VSGA Management Committee 2022-24

The Management Committee is comprised of elected governors plus the two Parent Governor Representatives (one each from the Primary and Secondary sectors).

No.	Title	Initial	Surname	School
1	Mr	P	Cate	Jenner Park Primary
2	Mr	N	Craggs	Gwenfo C/W Primary
3	Ms	J	Evans	Fairfield Primary & Gladstone Primary
4	Mrs	M	Gibbs	Romilly Primary
5	Mr	G	Griffiths	Ysgol Gwaun y Nant & Ysgol Sant Curig
6	Cllr Mr	A	Hennessey	Rhws Primary
7	Mrs	C	Hunt	St Nicholas C/W Primary
8	Mrs	S	Jenkins	St Andrews Major C/W Primary & St Cyres Comp
9	Dr	C	Lee	St Cyres Comp
10	Cllr Mrs	J	Lynch-Wilson	Llantwit Major Comp
11	Dr	M	Price	St Richard Gwyn R/C High
12	Mr	D	Treharne	Llansannor C/W Primary
13	Mrs	T	Vaughan-Taylor	Cowbridge Comp
14	Mr	O	Williams	Ysgol Sant Baruc
15	Cllr Mr	M	Wilson	Fairfield Primary & Victoria Primary

Parent Governor Representatives (PGRs)

Parent Governor Representative Primary - Lucy Barrowclough - Llandough Primary School

Parent Governor Representative Secondary - Ghislaine van de Burgt - Whitmore High School