



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

Note from the Chair

As I am sure you are sick of hearing, these are extraordinary times. The effects of the pandemic and rapidly changing events are a huge challenge. Our schools are at the forefront, and we need to recognise how much hard work has been done by Staff, Governors, and the Officers in the Vale of Glamorgan's Education Department.

Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee at its first meeting following Lockdown in September received a heartening presentation on the way schools in the Vale have responded to the pandemic. The support for vulnerable pupils is particularly impressive. Thousands of free school meal vouchers, hundreds of laptops and MiFi devices provided very quickly so pupils could continue their learning from home.

It is interesting to note the difference in approach with our neighbours in England. Because Welsh Government had already invested heavily in its centralised IT system - Hwb - and global software licences, it meant that home learning in Wales had a head start. Even my three-year-old twin grandchildren who are at nursery school have Hwb email accounts and were receiving lessons via Google Classroom

throughout lockdown.

Of course, digital lessons are no substitute for the face to face support of a good teacher in the classroom, but I am extremely impressed by the dedication of teachers in providing online content and supporting learners via email and phone.

I am also impressed by the huge effort in keeping schools going since September with the stringent Covid-19 safety regulations and the consequences of the vagaries of the testing regime. Managing schools has become much more complex and I take my hat off to Headteachers and Governors for making it all work so well in difficult circumstances. Well done!

And we are not out of the woods yet. Disruption and the use of blended learning will be with us for a while yet. Keep up the good work.

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

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

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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**

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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

Pupil Inclusion Update

There has been two recent publications that Governors should familiarise themselves with. The first one is an update on **Exclusion from schools and Pupil Welfare units Nov 2019**

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-11/exclusion-from-schools-pupil-referral-units.pdf>

This publication provides guidance on exclusions and appeal procedures for both mainstream schools and PRU's (Pupil Referral Units)

Under section 52(4) of the Education Act 2002, Head teachers, teachers in charge of a PRU, **Governing bodies**, LA's and independent appeal panels must **by law** have regard to this guidance when making decisions on exclusions and administering the exclusion procedures and appeals. This publication includes guidance on alternatives to exclusion which must be looked at before making an exclusion, outlines the responsibilities of the **Discipline committee** within the Governing body and includes model letters for notifying parents of all stages of exclusions.

The second one is a new **Pupil registration Guidance Nov 2019** released by Estyn

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/thematic-reports/pupil-registration-practices>

This report examines pupil registration practices in Wales and in particular the practice of schools taking a pupil off its roll completely without the use of formal permanent exclusions (off rolling) and a school changing the registration status of a pupil in yr 10/11 so that a pupils outcomes are not included in schools key stage 4 performance data. There are 9 recommendations which includes ensuring that **Governors monitor pupil movements** between years 10 and 11. Its also provides questions that a Governing body should be asking to support the **monitoring and evaluation of pupil progression** following the completion of PLASC.

If anyone has any queries / concerns regarding these publications and the expectations that falls upon Governors they can seek further guidance and support by emailing Keeva McDermott Inclusion Manager on kmcdermott@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)

FPN's can be used when school intervention to increase attendance is not successful. The Head Teacher authorises this request. Parents are initially sent a warning letter, with a short, specified monitoring period during which the pupil must attend daily. If this is successful, no penalty is given. Where there are unauthorised absences incurred during the monitoring period a financial penalty of £60 is given, to be paid within 28 days. If not paid within 28 days the parent has a further opportunity to pay within the next two weeks, but the amount rises to £120.

Once the penalty is paid there is no further EWS involvement.

Please note that a FPN does not result in a Criminal Record, whereas an EWS Prosecution does.

FPN Training

The Education Welfare Service offers training on the use of Fixed Penalty Notices. This has been very useful to schools where the Governing Body is unsure about the procedure. The training provides a clear and concise understanding of the process as a school attendance management tool.

The training is free and there is no obligation for schools to use FPNs following the training.

Training dates will be sent to schools, please speak to your chair of governors if you would like to attend or email Keeva McDermott Inclusion Manager on kmcdermott@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Don't stop me now!

Welsh classes continue.

Learn Welsh the Vale deliver courses for adults of all ages and backgrounds, at all levels from beginners to almost fluent. We have for a long time been using online platforms such as the national ground-breaking interactive website www.learnwelsh.cymru and social media platforms such as What's App, but who knew what 2020 would bring, when Covid-19 caused a lockdown? Learn Welsh turned to Zoom to deliver lessons, with tutors and learners venturing into a new world of meeting in the ether. We all learned new digital skills together!

As we adapted our timetable to accommodate home schooling and working from home, some learners found that their learning went on the back burner. Others saw the opportunity to do things they always had wanted to fit in. Led by the National Centre for Learning Welsh, the Vale's team piloted new Blended Learning courses, which were offered free during the lockdown, adding 4 extra classes to the timetable with learners joining in from near and far. We met new learners from England, Ireland, Germany and Dubai as well as Barry, Cowbridge and Penarth!

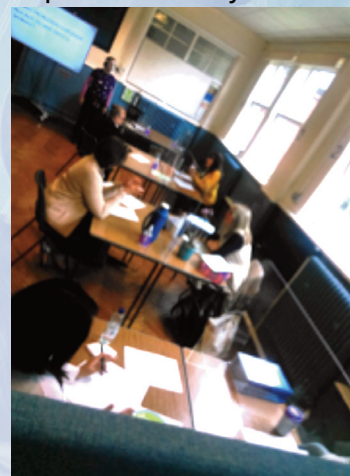


It was a learning curve for all, and many people embraced the new way of attending their lesson at home whilst sipping their favourite drink. The on-screen contact punctuated the week and created a sense of progress. Despite this success some of the learners longed to be back in our centres so over the summer we embraced the Welsh Government's recommendations and planned a way forward to include face to face teaching. By increasing ventilation, hygiene and reducing class sizes, Learn Welsh the Vale is leading the way with a

programme which offers three choices to the learner- online only, in class only or blended learning.

These are not the only changes. For three years Vale Council employees and Vale school staff have been funded to learn Welsh. This year we are inviting school governors and foster carers to apply for this support too. We want to help you as you support children and school communities. More courses for complete beginners will start in January, and people who want to restart their Welsh learning journey are welcome to contact us about joining a class that has already begun. Email us for more information on

learnwelsh@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
www.learnwelsh.cymru/thevale



dysgucymraeg.cymru
learnwelsh.cymru
Gogledd Orllewin
North West



Vale Rights Ambassadors Project – Supporting Schools To Raise Awareness of Children’s Rights

The Vale Rights Ambassadors project which is facilitated by the Vale Youth Service has continued to support Super Ambassador and Student Ambassador schools to raise awareness of Children’s Rights this term. Due to Covid-19 pandemic this work has been done digitally. Several Vale schools attended the Children’s Commissioner for Wales webinars back in October which gave teachers and pupils an opportunity to learn about the schemes for both primary and secondary schools.

For more information on the free ambassadors schemes follow this link:

<https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/our-schemes/>

We would like to encourage governors to speak with their schools to promote these free schemes.



Student Ambassador Training at St Cyres School

Ambassadors project please read their blogposts on <https://vogblog.wales/>

This term our Vale Rights Ambassadors have created an interactive video presentation for primary school pupils teaching them about their rights. Several primary schools have volunteered to pilot our digital training session. We have also been able to deliver Student Ambassador training in St Cyres School to help pupils learn about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and look at ways they can raise awareness of children’s rights in their school community.

It was also great to see many schools in the Vale mark International Children’s Day on the 20th November through their social media platforms. To keep up to date with the work of the Rights

VALE RIGHTS AMBASSADORS

Aged 11-25? You could be a Rights Ambassador!

WHAT WE DO

- Train young people on children's rights.
- Deliver rights workshops to children, young people and adults.
- Complete rights missions for the Children’s Commissioner Sally Holland.
- Take part in fun activities.

If you would like to get involved
contact Alex Thomas
T. 01446 709836
E. alexthomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

WHY WE DO IT

- To ensure children and young people in the Vale are respected and heard.
- To gain experience and meet with important decision makers.
- To gain volunteering hours towards Duke of Edinburgh Award or Welsh Baccalaureate.
- To develop communication, public speaking, debating and planning skills.
- To gain confidence and make lasting friendships beyond school years.

VSGA Management Committee 2020-21

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	R	Bailey	Peterston-Super-Ely C/W Primary
2	Dr	C	Brown	Llantwit Major Comp
3	Mr	N	Craggs	Gwenfo C/W Primary
4	Mrs	M	Gibbs	Romilly Primary
5	Mr	A	Hennessey	Oak Field Primary & Ysgol Sant Baruc
6	Mrs	S	Hodges	Ysgol Sant Baruc
7	Mrs	S	Jenkins-Welch	St Andrews C/W Primary & St Cyres Comprehensive
8	Mrs	J	Lynch-Wilson	St Athan Primary
9	Mrs	A	Males	St Cyres Comp
10	Mrs	A	Malkin	Gladstone Primary
11	Dr	M	Price	St Richard Gwyn R/C High
12	Mr	D	Treharne	Llansannor C/W Prim
13	Mrs	T	Vaughan-Taylor	Cowbridge Comp
14	Mrs	S	Williams	All Saints C/W Primary
15	Cllr Mr	M	Wilson	Fairfield Primary & Victoria Primary
Parent Governor Representatives' (PGRs) terms of office				
PGR - Prim Vacant				
PGR - Sec Vacant				

School Holiday Dates 2020/2021

Please note that these dates have been confirmed.

Term	Begin	Half Term		End	No. of School Days
		Begin	End		
Autumn 2020	Tuesday 1 Sept 2020	Monday 26 Oct 2020	Friday 30 Oct 2020	Friday 18 Dec 2020	74
Spring 2021	Monday 4 Jan 2021	Monday 15 Feb 2021	Friday 19 Feb 2021	Friday 26 March 2021	55
Summer 2021	Monday 12 April 2021	Monday 31 May 2021	Friday 4 June 2021	*Friday 20 July 2021	66
i) Thu 1 Sept 2020, *Mon 19 and Tue 20 July 2021 will be designated INSET days for all LEA Maintained Schools. The remaining two INSET days to be taken will be at the discretion of each individual school. *It is intended that these INSET days will either be taken on Mon 19 and Tue 20 July 2021 or at alternative times to be decided by individual schools following appropriate consultation with staff i.e. for example in the form of twilight sessions.				TOTAL	195

All schools will be closed on **Monday 3 May 2021** for the May Day Bank Holiday.

Significant dates:

Christmas

Saturday 25 December 2020

Easter

Good Friday 2 April 2021

Easter Monday 5 April 2021

May Bank Holidays

Friday 3 May 2021

Monday 31 May 2021



The Big Fresh Catering Company

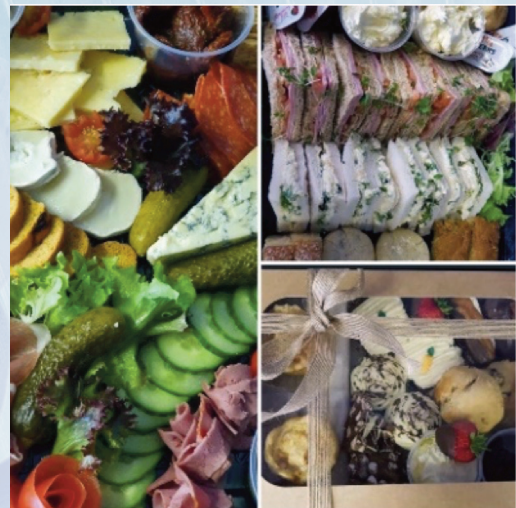
This year has thrown a curve ball to every part of education, even the school meals catering sector. We have not let it deter us from doing what we do best as a team here at The Big Fresh Catering Company.

When all schools shut back in March, Hub schools were set up across the Vale of Glamorgan to help key workers carry on working through the pandemic. We were tasked with feeding these pupils with a breakfast, lunch and evening snack. Our staff worked tirelessly throughout this period helping out and feeding pupils across the Vale of Glamorgan. This also stretched to feeding the construction staff at the new build secondary schools in Barry. We couldn't be more proud of the efforts our staff displayed.

As we managed to put most of our staff on Furlough from March to September, there were a few members of staff that carried the Big Fresh flag to help out where we were needed. A new avenue opened up for us over the summer in the way of Afternoon Tea and Grazing Boards and Cake Boxes that really took off in a big way. A Facebook account was set up and within half an hour we took our first order. From this point, the orders were coming in thick and fast which we were quick to respond to and enjoyed providing our new customers with our tasty treats. It was great that we could help put a smile on people's faces in such challenging times. This new service hasn't stopped, we are still working hard developing new ideas to enhance our platters to give our customers the Big Fresh experience.

When schools re opened in September, we knew a new wave of challenges would appear! We are working closely with our schools to make sure we can provide a service to our customers in the safest possible way, whether this be in the form of a grab bag or a hot dinner delivered to school classroom. We are making sure all of our staff are supported in our approach to safety and providing the best service possible to the pupils and teaching staff during this tough time. We are proud of the bonds that have shone through with our schools in providing for our children.

All self-isolating free school meal pupils received a doorstep delivery of food from the Big Fresh team between the beginning of September to October half term. Food vouchers (which can be used for online shopping and delivery) are now in place for these families as they stay at home and follow WG Guidelines.





Our ideas just keep flowing at The Big Fresh and we have some extremely talented Chefs (above are Tracey Smart 'Kitchen Manager' & Natalie Jones 'Mobile Kitchen Manager') amongst our school kitchen staff that transfer their baking skills to create cup cakes, tray bakes and biscuits for themed occasions. We have recently produced these ghoulishly tasty Halloween cakes and tray bakes that were a huge hit. We are always looking for the next fun idea and the team are now working hard to perfect our Christmas delights that will be available very soon. Why not find us on Facebook and see all we have to offer or go to our website www.bigfreshcatering.co.uk. We look forward to serving you soon.

Schools: coronavirus guidance

<https://gov.wales/schools-coronavirus-guidance#section-52393>

**Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year**

