



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

## Note from the Chair

I am nursing a dully aching arm. Yesterday I had my booster Covid-19 vaccination at the Jabs 'r Us in Cardiff Bay. I am sure the inside of the building looks smaller now than when it was stuffed full of toys, but I digress. My discomfort is only a small part in the whole way in which the pandemic has changed the lives of everybody around the globe, and Vale schools are no exception.

I am in awe of how schools have coped with large numbers of staff and students off with Covid or isolating because someone they are close to has the virus. The successful vaccination programmes are a great help, but we are going to have to live with this for a long time. The virus has not gone away.

The disruption to children's lives over the past eighteen months continues and don't believe anyone who tells you that the virus is milder in children and young people. Some may be lucky, just as there are adults who are asymptomatic, but I know lots of teenagers who have been very poorly.

But schools are flexible, most children are resilient and resourceful. Education has continued in person and online. But at what cost to the staff in our schools who are keeping it all together. One of our most important roles as Governors is to ensure the wellbeing of the people who work in our

schools. Are they looking after themselves properly under extraordinary pressures? Do they need someone to vent to? Someone to listen sympathetically and offer helpful informed advice? Our Headteachers and Senior Management are passionate dedicated people, but they sometimes needsomeone to tell them to slow down and take a breather.

Talking of the Wellbeing of staff and students is very fashionable at the moment, but it has never been more important than in these extraordinary times. Is it a standing item on every Governing Body Meeting? If not, why not?

To all Governors: Keep safe. Look after yourselves and look at your own wellbeing. I will go back to nursing my arm knowing that I am a little more protected than I was the day before yesterday, and that a little ache is worth it for long-term gain.

**Dr Martin Price**

**Chair VSGA and Vice Chair of  
Governors, St Richard Gwyn  
Catholic High School, Barry**

## Issue 51 Autumn Term 2021

### 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

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

It's [VSGA@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto: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**



## Secondary Education 2021 (Year 7) and Primary Education 2021 (Primary) Process Review

The Admissions Team's efforts in not only contacting parents to submit an application, but also advising on the application process in relation to the use of multiple preferences and the catchment area school being selected as a preference, resulted in 99.4% of parents of children attending Year 6 at a Vale of Glamorgan Primary school submitting an application on time for their child to attend Secondary Education in 2021. We are hopeful this will continue to improve the rate of successful applicants receiving an offer of a school place for their child/children during the 1st round of allocations which will be confirmed on the offer date – 1st March 2021. This was similar for the reception admission process where again parents were repeatedly contacted to ensure they made an application for their child to attend reception class in September 2021. This resulted in 99.8% of parents submitting an application on time and who will receive an offer of a school place on the offer date of the 16 April 2021. The above steps taken by the admissions team will ensure that the vast majority of parents will receive an offer of a school place for their child/children on the national offer dates mentioned above.

**The council's admissions online application process now seems well embedded with 92% of parents applying for a Year 7 September 2021 place online during the 2020/21 academic year which is in line with the previous 3 years of between 90-95%.**

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## Update on Co-ordinated School Admission Arrangements 2020-21

Following a consultation to continue a pilot scheme for co-ordinated admission arrangements for the Reception age group for 2021-22, the governing bodies of Llansannor C.W Primary, St Andrew's Major C.W Primary, St Bride's Major C.W Primary, St David's C.W Primary and Wick & Marcross C.W Primary have agreed to continue their participation in the scheme. In addition to Vale of Glamorgan community Schools you can now also apply for places in these schools by using the online application service.

The pilot scheme has proved to be successful and has allowed parents additional preferences whilst also resolving the issue of parents being allocated multiple places via different admissions authorities. This therefore creates a more transparent process for parents, schools and the local authority. Feedback is continually received from both participating schools and parents as to how the process can be improved and we are keen to enhance the support available to all parties wherever possible.

The 2020-21 academic year has also seen St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School participate in a pilot scheme for the Transfer to Secondary Education 2021-22. The pilot scheme is designed with the same principles as the primary admissions pilot scheme; In addition to Vale of Glamorgan community Schools you can now also apply for places in these schools by using the online application service. This will provide an improved service for parents and greater clarity and opportunities for future collective working for the school and the local authority whilst ensuring that pupils are not holding more than one offer of a place at a secondary school on the national offer date.

**Sam Mawhinney**

**Logistics & Access Officer / Swyddog Derbyniadau Cynorthwyol  
School Improvement & Inclusion / Strategaeth, Dysgu yn y Gymuned ac Adnoddau**

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## Operational guidance for schools and settings to support limited attendance

Please click on the link below:

<https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-support-limited-attendance>



## **WELSH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE (IFUS) FOR LATERAL FLOW DEVICES**

In our response to the pandemic we have been working at pace to ensure emergency services and information have been made available to the public as soon as possible. We appreciate your patience as some of these have had to be issued in English only.

We are now in a position to offer Welsh language IFUs in order to provide services, especially to those who are fragile, vulnerable and affected by the pandemic, in their preferred language. As per Welsh Language Standards, the Welsh language version of material must not be treated less favourably than the English language version therefore we will be sending an allocation of Welsh language IFUs to Local Authorities to distribute to local schools, colleges and childcare settings.

We are working with colleagues in UK Government to improve this for future deliveries, where Welsh language IFUs would be delivered alongside English versions.

During a public health crisis, the active offer of services and information in Welsh has never been more important. As anxieties persist during the pandemic, many of those affected by the virus will depend on receiving services and information in their first and preferred language.

**The Covid Education and Childcare Testing Team, Welsh Government**

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## **MIND E-LEARNING MENTAL HEALTH PACKAGE IS NOW LIVE**

The Consortia Well-Being Partnership have collaborated with @MindCymru to provide all education professionals in Wales access to a 45 minute mental health awareness e-learning package - for more details and access click here:

<https://sewaleseas.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MIND-Mental-Health-Awareness-E-Learning-Module.pdf>

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## **Amplify! How to maximise young people's voices through your secondary school council.**

In 2019 and 2020 the Children's Commissioner for Wales consulted with more than 7000 young people and over 400 professionals and governors about school councils. You told us school councils were an important way to make sure young people get their right to have a say in decisions. You also shared your experiences of how young people's voices can help make decisions to support wellbeing, learning and equality.

Ready for the new academic year, the Children's Commissioner is now publishing the findings of this consultation: <https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/amplify-how-to-maximise-young-peoples-voices-through-your-secondary-school-council/>. You'll find case studies, films, top tips and resources to help all secondary settings ensure they have an empowered school council who can make a difference.

The report and practical resources will inspire Heads, teachers, governors and young people. Resources include a toolkit for young people and symbols-supported accessible information and guidance.

**Jane Houston**  
Policy Adviser  
Children's Commissioner for Wales



## Big Fresh Catering Company goes from strength to strength

"I'm thrilled that schools are now starting to reap rewards from of the cutting-edge approach we have taken to operating the Big Fresh Catering Company. "Every partner school in the county has received their first share of the profits, while significant sums of money have also been spent in other areas that will benefit them. "I'm grateful for the commitment schools have shown in getting behind this new venture and I'm confident together we can achieve even more as the business grows."

**Carole Tyley**

**Managing Director of the Big Fresh Catering Company**







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## **School governing body equality and diversity champion – model role description**

This document is provided to give school governing bodies in Wales an understanding of the benefits of appointing an equality and diversity champion for their school and the duties they may perform. The appointment of an equality and diversity champion does not alter the requirements on a governing body to fulfil its statutory equality functions as listed.

### **Why does my governing body need an equality and diversity champion?**

All schools in Wales should strive to be as inclusive and welcoming as possible. Differences should be celebrated, not mocked and questioned. Schools should have a zero tolerance approach to all forms of bullying and harassment. An equality and diversity champion is one way to show the whole school community that your governing body takes this seriously and wants to lead by example.<sup>1</sup>

### **What's involved?**

An equality and diversity champion should be prepared to speak up for equality and diversity at all times and in all policy making decisions. They should be comfortable in challenging school leaders and governors where they think the school is falling short or acting in a way that is discriminatory. They should also raise awareness about the issues related to diversity and inclusion to promote equality.

Champions should also work with the head teacher and local authority to monitor and update the school's strategic equality plans and equality objectives. This will provide accountability for the school on the effectiveness of its policies.

### **What special qualifications, training or experience do I need to take on this role?**

None. An equality and diversity champion just needs to be passionate about fairness for all.

However, a champion may wish to take advantage of any additional training offered by their local authority or consortium related to equality and diversity. This will help to ensure they're equipped with the knowledge and tools to help hold their school leadership team to account in a meaningful way.

### **Where can I find help and support on diversity issues?**

There are many resources online to help identify discrimination. Third sector organisations such as [Show Racism the Red Card](#), [Stonewall Cymru](#) and [SNAP Cymru](#) are all good places to start. Your local authority may also offer equality training, on top of what's offered in the mandatory governor induction training package. For staff with ME backgrounds it would be helpful to also signpost them to [BAME Ed Network Wales](#).

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<sup>1</sup> The [school governors' guide to the law](#) provides more information on what is expected of governing bodies in relation to equality legislation





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### **What questions should the equality and diversity champion be asking the head teacher and the governing body?**

The equality and diversity champion should be prepared to ask what the head teacher and governing body are doing to ensure the school is a beacon for diversity and promoting equality. Here are some examples:

- How does the school ethos celebrate differences?
- How are we developing the whole school community's understanding of different cultures and backgrounds?
- Please explain how allegations of racism/homophobia/transphobia/bullying related to disabilities and additional learning needs (involving both staff and learners) are dealt with at the school.<sup>2</sup> Is this approach good enough?
- Who is the named support person/s for staff and learners to approach if they have concerns? What processes are in place to help staff and learners speak up without fear of reproach and in confidence their issue will be dealt with properly?
- In what ways do you think the teaching and learning in the school reflects diversity as a core cross cutting theme of the curriculum? What innovations and initiatives are being put in place?
- How inclusive is the school uniform policy?<sup>3</sup>
- How are learners' thoughts and opinions about equality and diversity in school captured and taken into account?
- What steps are being taken to ensure the school staff and governing body are as diverse and representative of our community as possible?
- What checks are in place to ensure the school's compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011?<sup>4</sup>
- What are we doing to implement the recommendations from the [Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group: final report](#)?
- How do we ensure any changes to school policies and new school policies do not adversely affect any particular groups?
- What more can we do as a school to champion equality and diversity?

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<sup>2</sup> Guidance on recording bullying incidents can be found within [Rights, respect, equality: guidance for schools](#)

<sup>3</sup> Guidance on equality issues and school uniform policies can be found within [School uniform and appearance: policy guidance for governing bodies](#)

<sup>4</sup> [The Equality Act 2010](#) and [The Equality Act 2010 \(Statutory Duties\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2011](#)





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## **SCHOOL GOVERNORS IN WALES BULLETIN ISSUE 8 – NOVEMBER 2021 -**

**Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language**

22 October 2021 - **Written Statement: Update on progress of the recommendations in the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities, Contributions and Cynefin in the New Curriculum Working Group**

14 October 2021 - **Funding to improve ventilation in schools and learning environments**

27 September 2021- **Minister for Education and Welsh Language confirms nominated appointments to the Education Workforce Council**

24 September 2021 - **Minister for Education and Welsh Language confirms appointments to the Qualifications Wales Board**

22 September 2021 - **Written Statement: Journey to Curriculum Rollout**

8 September 2021 - **Written Statement: Teachers' Pay Award 2021**

## **NEWS**

### **GOVERNMENT FUNDED ANTI-BULLYING TRAINING FOR GOVERNORS**

The Welsh Government has funded Kidscape to deliver a programme of anti-bullying training for governors in Wales in 2021 and 2022.

The content of this training has been informed through consultation with governors in Wales and developed with support from the Anti-Bullying Alliance.

For more information and to book your place visit **Anti-bullying training for governors in Wales ([kidscape.org.uk](https://kidscape.org.uk))** – sessions in Welsh are available on 25 November 2021 and 10 May 2022.

### **UPDATE ON THE REVIEW INTO PEER-ON-PEER SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN EDUCATION SETTINGS**

**“HUGE WELL DONE TO GCSE AND VOCATIONAL LEARNERS ACROSS WALES” – EDUCATION MINISTER**

### **NEW ESTYN CHIEF INSPECTOR ANNOUNCED**



## GUIDANCE

### SCHOOL GOVERNORS' GUIDE TO THE LAW UPDATES

We are in the process of refreshing the guide chapter by chapter. So far, chapters 1-5, 7, 12 and 19 have been published alongside annexes 1-3. Keep an eye out for further updates.

### PROTECTION OF BIOMETRIC INFORMATION: GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS AND FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Last updated 5 October 2021

### RENEW AND REFORM: SUPPORTING LEARNERS' WELLBEING AND PROGRESSION

Last updated 22 September 2021

### INFORMATION AND DATA COLLECTION CALENDAR

Last updated 3 September 2021

### GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS TO IMPLEMENT THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Last updated 27 August 2021

## CORONAVIRUS

**SCHOOL OPERATIONS: CORONAVIRUS** Updated 12 October 2021.

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (CORONAVIRUS): GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS** Updated 20 October 2021.

**CARBON DIOXIDE MONITORS IN EDUCATION SETTINGS** Last updated 15 October 2021

**SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS: CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)** Last updated 29 September 2021

## LEGISLATIVE CHANGES DERIVING FROM THE CORONAVIRUS ACT 2020

**THE EDUCATION (ADMISSION APPEALS ARRANGEMENTS) (WALES) (CORONAVIRUS) (AMENDMENT) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2021** These Regulations amend the Education (Admission Appeals Arrangements) (Wales) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020.

**THE RELAXATION OF SCHOOL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS (WALES) (CORONAVIRUS) REGULATIONS 2021** | **GOV.WALES** These Regulations relax a number of requirements on schools as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

## CONSULTATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO FEED BACK

**PERIOD DIGNITY STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN** Consultation ends 12 January 2022

**STATEMENTS OF WHAT MATTERS CODE** Details of outcome

**DRAFT PROGRESSION CODE** Details of outcome

**NATIONAL POLICY ON WELSH LINGUISTIC INFRASTRUCTURE** Details of outcome

**SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GUIDANCE** Details of outcome

## FIND OUT MORE

**SIGN UP TO DYSG / EDUCATION IS CHANGING /**

**OUR NATIONAL MISSION - CURRICULUM FOR WALES BLOG / CURRICULUM FOR WALES 2022**

**DIGITAL COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK / HWB**

**FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK:** Education Wales

**FOLLOW US ON TWITTER:**

@WG\_Education / @WelshGovernment / @HwbNews

**FOLLOW US ON YOUTUBE:** Education Wales

If you would like to give us any feedback, need more information, or have a general query, you can contact us at: [SMED2@gov.wales](mailto:SMED2@gov.wales)



## CO-ORDINATED SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

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, and Wick & Marcross C.W Primary and for the 2022-23 intake, St Joseph's R.C Primary have agreed to become part of the co-ordinated arrangements.

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 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, it 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**  
Strategy, Community Learning and Resources

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## Qualifications Wales confirms the summer 2022 grading approach

Dear Governor,

Qualifications Wales has today confirmed the grading approach and contingency plans for the summer 2022 exam series for WJEC GCSE, AS and A levels and Skills Challenge Certificate qualifications.

<https://qualificationswales.org/english/news/qualifications-wales-confirms-the-summer-2022-grading-approach/>

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## Update on the Additional Learning Needs system

The Minister for Education has announced that the Additional Learning Needs Code and associated regulations have been laid before Senedd Cymru.

You can view the Code, Explanatory Memorandum and Integrated Impact Assessment **here** and the associated regulations **here**:

- The Additional Learning Needs (Wales) Regulations 2021
- The Education Tribunal for Wales Regulations 2021
- The Equality Act 2010 (Capacity of parents and persons over compulsory school age) (Wales) Regulations 2021
- The Education (Pupil Referral Units) (Management Committees etc.) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021
- The Independent Schools (Provision of Information) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2021

Further information about the ALN transformation programme and guidance on the current SEN system is available **here** including our frequently asked questions and ALN transformation programme guide.

Please send any queries to **SENReforms@gov.wales**



## Embedding a whole-school approach to mental health and well-being

Now more than ever, the emotional and mental well-being of our children and young people and workforce has to be our number one priority.

The new Framework on embedding a whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being is intended to support schools, including pupil referral units (PRUs) and education settings in reviewing their own well-being landscape and in developing plans to address their weaknesses and build on their strengths. Here's a letter that has been issued to Directors of Education.

### HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US!

You can support the campaign by:

- sharing and re-tweeting messages from our social media channels: Twitter; Education Wales Facebook and Education begins at home Facebook
- Whole-school approach - YouTube Playlist - Share our animation with learners and case studies with the workforce
- including information on your website, in newsletters, emails
- sharing with your networks / young people / stakeholders / parents/carers

### TEXT FOR NEWSLETTERS

#### Embedding a whole-school approach to mental health and well-being

The whole-school approach is about supporting good emotional and mental well-being by making relationships stronger:

- between you and your teachers;
- and between parents, families, carers, and any professionals working with the school

Our new statutory framework supports everyone to ensure positive mental health and emotional well-being of all learners and staff is at the heart of every school

### SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

#### For stakeholders

Building stronger relationships and supporting each other is at the very heart of the new #WholeSchoolApproach to mental health and emotional well-being framework <https://bit.ly/2PTNPs7>

#### For learners

New animation explains how stronger relationships with your friends and teachers can help and support you <https://bit.ly/3eDXfCs> #WholeSchoolApproach

Remember to tag us in @WG\_Education

And use the hashtag #WholeSchoolApproach

### FURTHER HELP AND SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

You can signpost young people to our **Young Person's Mental Health Toolkit** should they need support now and in the future.

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## DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Please could you make a note in your diary for the next Education Update & Briefing Session will be

**Wednesday 29 June 2022 at 5.30pm**



# VSGA Management Committee 2020-22

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	Malkin	Gladstone Primary
10	Dr	M	Price	St Richard Gwyn R/C High
11	Mr	D	Treharne	Llansannor C/W Prim
12	Mrs	T	Vaughan-Taylor	Cowbridge Comp
13	Cllr Mr	M	Wilson	Fairfield Primary & Victoria Primary
14	Vacancy			
15	Vacancy			

## Parent Governor Representatives' (PGRs) terms of office

PGR - Prim Vacant

PGR - Sec Vacant

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*  
from all at the Governor Support Unit

