

Vale School Governor's Association and Governor Support Unit Newsletter

Note from the Chair

Well, on the bright side, the continuous unremitting rain seems to have abated. We have even had some lovely bright spring days. Things are looking up. Perhaps we will have a long hot summer.

On the not so bright side, I and your VSGA Governor representatives attended a rather dispiriting Education Budget Forum Meeting a couple of weeks ago. The Budget Forum is a statutory requirement for all Local Authorities in Wales. It has Headteacher and Governor members from all the sectors – Primary, Secondary, Special, Welsh-Medium, Faith – together with the senior staff from the Vale's Education Service and the relevant Cabinet Member. Its role is to oversee the fair distribution of money to schools, the basic Welsh Government allocation, and then the myriad of other grants which appear for various purposes during the year.

This was the first face-to-face meeting of the committee for some time. We have only been seeing each other only online. The gravity of the situation was underlined by the attendance of the Chief Executive of the Council and the Finance Director, and there was a full attendance of Heads and Governors.

The Finance Director outlined the parlous state of school funding in the Vale. Current projections are that cumulative reserves for schools in Vale will move from a seven-figure surplus in March 2023 to a forecast seven-figure deficit in March 2025. This is largely caused by the non-funding of the pay increases for staff – teaching and non-teaching. Since some 90% of most schools' budget are spent on staff costs it is apparent that the vast majority of schools in the Vale will be posting deficit budgets for this financial year.

This is a Wales-wide issue. Headteachers in Conwy, Denbighshire and Powys have already been writing to parents. It is particularly bad in the Vale because of past underfunding. Vale schools are running with the bare minimum of staffing to deliver statutory requirements.

The learners in our care get only one chance at their education and the lack of money means fewer teachers and learning support assistants, larger classes, less support for children with additional needs, less behaviour support, fewer books....

Learners in the Vale and in Wales as a whole deserve better. It is a poor society which does not think it worth investing in its children.

Dr Martin Price

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

Issue 58

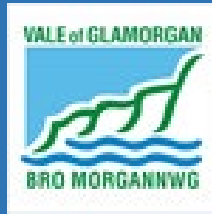
Summer Term 2024

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



Unpaid Young Carers:

Raising awareness, identification, and support.

Young carers are children and young people under the age of 18 who provide care and support for a family member who is disabled, physically or mentally ill, or is affected by substance misuse.

The person they look after may be a parent, a sibling, a grandparent or other relative. They may provide practical or physical care, help with personal care, domestic tasks and/or emotional support. Approximately 1 in 8 young people are unpaid young carers.

Teams from across the local authority work in partnership to ensure that young carers are understood, identified, and provided with appropriate support. This provides a holistic and child centred approach to support young carers, from identification, to young carers support delivered by Early Help Team and the YMCA Young Carers Project, with support and challenge in terms of education for young carers through the Learning Links Team.

What support is there for Young Carers in the Vale?

Learning Links Team (LLT)

01446 709130 learninnglinksteam@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

We are a specialist team of education professionals working within Standards and Provision of the Vale of Glamorgan Learning and Skills directorate

We understand that some children and young people face additional challenges that may impact on their lives, and their education.

Our aim is for Young Carers to feel seen, heard, and supported, so that they can access an appropriate education and achieve the best possible educational outcomes.

We work with children and young people, designated teachers in schools, social workers, carers, families, and other professionals to ensure high aspirations and targeted support is the shared goal of everyone involved with the child or young person.

The service is delivered in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including the children and young people themselves, parents/carers, Children and Young People Services, Family First Advice Line, Early Help Team, other local authorities, and schools.

The LLT provides support and training for schools to meet the educational needs of learners identified as young carers.

The LLT are a first point of contact for Schools, Designated teachers, Children's Services, health, and third sector partners, to meet the individual needs of young carers. This ensures a joined up multi agency approach to support young carers on their road to success.



Vale Early Help/ Families First Advice Line (FFAL)

0800 0327322 familiesfirstadvice@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Our service provides information, advice and assistance for parents, carers and professionals in the Vale of Glamorgan. It has the responsibility for receiving requests and referrals for the Social Care Officer (Carers) to complete parent carer/ young carer assessments to identify needs.

We:

- Provide information regarding unpaid carers.
- Collaborate with LLT, YMCA, and other youth services to raise awareness of Young Carers
- Support families for around 6-12 weeks to ensure needs are met.
- Signpost families to relevant services dependent on their needs and requirements.
- All referrals are screened through the FFAL, who will then forward on all necessary details.

Joint visits to schools by the LLT and FFAL:

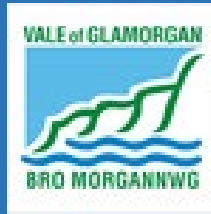
- Ensure all staff are aware of what a young carer is
- Remind schools of the Vale Referral Pathway to FFAL
- Raise awareness to pupils through assemblies / posters etc
- Ensure young carer leads in schools are informed of the support that is available for young carers within the Vale
- Support schools to approach conversations with parents regarding referrals
- Promote the Young Carers in Schools Programme

From March 2024 to May 2024, 19 visits took place. During this period, we have seen a rise in the number of referrals to FFAL particularly in relation to pupils attending those schools visited.

A total of 165 young carers have been identified to date. Of these, 67 have an identified additional learning need (ALN), 24 of which have social emotional and mental health needs (SEMHP).

Effective cross directorate partnership working has shown that Vale schools are committed to meeting the needs of young carers.





Vale Young Carers Project



The young carers project in the Vale is funded by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and run by YMCA Cardiff. It is currently supporting around 140 young carers across the County. We deliver regular respite activities to young carers, aged 7 – 18 years old, giving them an opportunity to socialise, learn new skills, make friends, and have fun!

The **Young Carers Youth Club** at the YMCA Hub, Court Road, Barry, CF63 4EE, is open every Thursday & Friday evening during term time for young people who have been accepted after referral onto the Project.

YMCA Cardiff also deliver the **Young Carers ID cards**, [Home - YMCA Cardiff](#) these are a simple card to help professional including doctors, teachers and pharmacists to recognise young carers and support them appropriately.

Young Carers in School Programme

07860 957621 | LisaHowells@Tuvida.org

<https://www.tuvida.org/young-carers-in-schools>

The Carers Accreditation and Grants Team have been working with schools in the Vale of Glamorgan since November 2016. Since April 2024, the service has been run by the charity TuVida.

Seven out of eight secondary schools in the Vale have achieved at least **one** stage of the Young Carers in Schools Programme, with **three out of eight** achieving **two** stages, with **two out of eight** achieving all **three** stages.

The start of April 2024 we had **three primaries** engaged and in the middle of May there are an additional three schools interested in learning more about the process and more keen to access staff training to support the identification of hidden carers.

We recently worked with the Young Carers Task and Finish Group to develop a presentation for Young Carers Action Day in March 2024, where students shared their views on what makes 'A Fairer Future for Young Carers'.

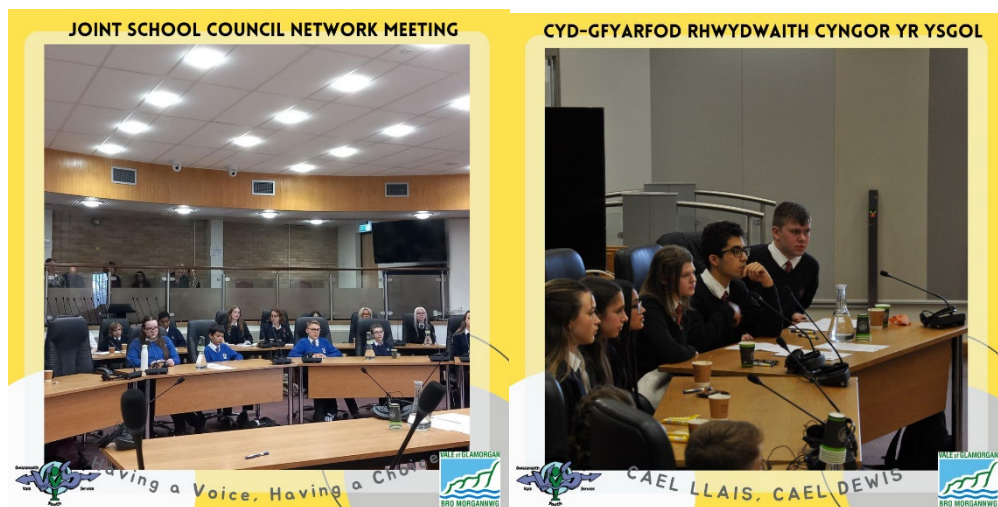
During Carers' Week 10- 16 June 2024, we will share our responses to some of the suggestions that were made in a recorded session for schools to use in form time, helping to raise awareness of support for unpaid carers of all ages and the support schools offer in their school.



Joint Secondary School Council Network Meetings

The Vale Youth Service have continued to facilitate termly joint secondary school network meetings, providing ongoing pupil voice support. These meetings bring together pupils from across all secondary schools to meet with other pupils and share their pupil voice work. The meetings are held once a term in the council chambers and is attended by Cllr Rhiannon Birch, Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and Welsh Language, Cllr Ewan Goodjohn Youth Champion Senior Leaders from the Education Department.

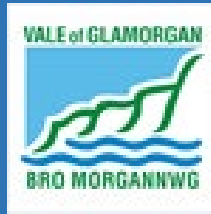
It provides an opportunity for pupils to learn more about the council and education matters and it gives them the opportunity to ask questions to decision makers. Pupils have had the opportunity to hear about the Social, Emotional, Mental Health Wellbeing Strategy as well as proposed plans to update the Anti Bullying Policy. Our next meeting takes place on the 28th June in the Council Chambers and we would encourage secondary school governors who link into pupil voice support to encourage their schools to attend and share their school news and to feedback on their experiences from attending the meetings. We would like to thank all the schools that have attended the meetings held.



Meeting held on the 9th November 2023



Meeting held on the 22nd March 2024



It has been another very busy period for us here at Big Fresh. We managed a full roll out of UPFSM (Universal free school meals) for all primary age children in the Vale of Glamorgan since April 2023. This has been a massive task to pull off and one we are extremely proud of as we were the first authority in Wales to roll out to all primary ages.

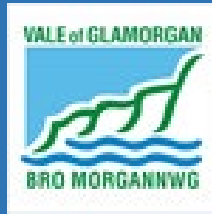
The feedback we have received from our schools has been very encouraging and puts us in a very positive position to push on continuing the standard of service we have grown to recognise as normal for Big Fresh. As recognition of the standard our staff set, we have at big Fresh, we currently have 2 members of staff in the Welsh regional final of the school chef of the year competition which is taking place in Cannock on 22nd May.

Big Fresh Catering management team were nominated and won management team of year for Wales in our regional LACA Wales (local authority catering association) awards ceremony. This is something we are all very proud of and shows what great work we have achieved over the last year with The Big Fresh Catering Company.

Big fresh are pleased to announce the opening of Belle Vue Community centre in Penarth last August 2023. We have taken on a café area inside the community centre that will offer the same food and drinks offering as our sister venue Big Fresh @ the pier. The space is a great place to hot desk or the perfect setting for a staff meeting, office away day or children's party. Come take a look yourself with a nice coffee and a piece of cake in the lovely surroundings of the tranquil Belle Vue Park. Big Fresh @ the Pier continues to thrive and has once again been there to serve film crews and characters that has taken place over the last 6 months. Keep your eyes peeled for the building on your television soon. Likewise with our unmissable airstream food truck, we have been sited up at Whitmore High all over the football season to feed the parents of the next Lionel Messi or Sam Kerr. Hopefully you have seen us and tasted some delights, if you haven't, we will be at different events over the summer so don't be shy and come say hi.

Our buffet side of the business is still growing strong so remember if you have meetings of any kind and are looking for any catering to impress your colleagues or friends, contact us and let us help.

[Schools - Big Fresh Catering Company](#)



Vale of Glamorgan Council's Education Service and Youth Service Praised in Inspection reports.

(Update taken from Staffnet; May 2024)

Estyn recently undertook two separate inspections, one assessing the local government education service as a whole provided by the Council and the second focussing on the Youth Service. Estyn's reports, published today, are hugely complimentary about the performance of both.

Chief Executive Rob Thomas said: "I know how much preparation went into these inspections and how hard colleagues in the Youth Service and Learning and Skills work. I'm delighted that this effort has been reflected in these inspection reports.

"A huge thank you to all involved for your dedication and commitment to the young people of our communities.

"Your contribution makes a real difference to these individuals, providing them with opportunities, confidence and the platform to be successful in later life.

"Inspections can be stressful, but everyone involved approached this challenge with the utmost professionalism and the results are there for all to see. Congratulations, you have done the Vale proud."

"The reports are also a fitting tribute to our Director – Paula Ham, who retires from the Council at the end of June. These extremely positive reports provide firm evidence of the commitment which Paula has shown to education and youth work in the Vale of Glamorgan during her time as Director and something that she should be extremely proud of."

The education service report, states: "Officers carry out their roles diligently and are committed to ensuring that all children and young people in the Vale have access to high quality education and support...

"The Local Authority provides strong support for its schools in relation to supporting pupils with Additional Learning Needs and officers have worked well to strategically plan and deliver support for schools to prepare for the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (ALNET). In addition, support for schools to improve pupils' attendance is generally effective. The Local Authority uses a broad range of data and works closely with schools and families, and attendance is improving.

"Members, senior leaders and officers are committed to reducing the impact of poverty on children and young people and work in this area has focussed closely on improving well-being, supporting families and addressing food insecurity....

"Cross-directorate working is a notable strength of the Local Authority's work. The shared ambitions and cross directorate planning have secured effective working across all directorates that has supported education services well. This has helped the Local Authority to prioritise funding for education and work collaboratively....."



The report also included two recommendations, which were to “sharpen the focus of evaluation and improvement processes” and “improve the quality and use of information about learning and teaching in schools to enable the Local Authority to best direct its resources towards areas for improvement.”

There was similar acclaim for the youth service, with the report into its activities

revealing: “By taking part in the Vale youth service activities, many young people gain the skills, knowledge, understanding, attitudes and values to support their own personal development and wellbeing. They develop a wide range of skills as well as gaining more formal accreditation through a range of local and national awards and accreditation opportunities.

“In targeted school sessions, young people develop resilience and coping skills which enhance their formal learning. Many who have not enjoyed success before grow in confidence, make better relationships and consider their futures.

“Young people participate enthusiastically and express their views in all the sessions we observed. Members of the Vale Youth Council articulate their views and opinions in a sophisticated and well-argued manner. These young people develop a strong understanding of the democratic process and become accomplished public speakers. Other young people express themselves through sporting activities, martial arts projects and gardening. They show an eagerness to contribute to the group dynamic.

Many young people are confident in expressing their own identities and perspectives while also learning to appreciate others. They become effective advocates for their rights, inclusion, and social justice. They challenge discrimination, promote equality and create positive change within their peer groups...

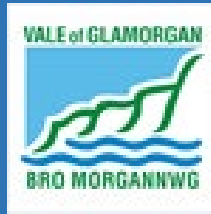
“The quality of youth work is consistently high. Youth workers are very clear about the principles of youth work and reflect this in their practice. They are dedicated to their roles, communicate effectively, build positive relationships with young people and have high levels of energy and enthusiasm. They constantly seek ways to refine and improve their work. Those who work in school settings are highly regarded by school staff as equal professionals. They are valued by young people and their parents and carers.

“Youth workers quickly assess the needs of young people with more complex challenges and the positive working relationships within and across the various teams and partners means that support is both prompt and efficient. They have the attitude that, whatever the barriers, they will never give up on a young person. They are trusted highly and play a significant role in supporting young people who are struggling as well as extending effective support to the wider family...

“The Vale of Glamorgan youth service is strongly based on the voice of young people and on providing the support that they need to grow as confident and informed citizens.”

Inspectors made just one recommendation, to “Develop opportunities for Welsh medium and bilingual youth work provision.”

This extremely positive feedback ensures the Council can move forward from a position of strength when delivering the very best for our children and young people.



NHS
WALES
GIG
CYMRU

Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Caerdydd a'r Fro
Cardiff and Vale
University Health Board



Mae Brechu yn
achub bywydau
Vaccination
saves lives

Childhood Vaccination: how schools are helping to protect the health of children and communities

Vaccination is one of the most important things we can do to protect our health and wellbeing, and we start having them from 8 weeks old until we are in old [age](#), helping to prevent many diseases and serious illnesses. Vaccination also protects others around us.

Sadly, we have seen a decline in uptake of some childhood vaccines in recent years, which means that as a population we are becoming more at risk of developing illnesses such as measles.

The UK has current measles outbreaks, including in Wales. Measles is an extremely contagious disease and can cause serious complications for unvaccinated children and adults.

A measles outbreak in any school would be hugely disruptive, including unvaccinated children and adults requiring to be **away from the school for up to 3 weeks** for every time they have been identified as contacts of a case of measles.

Schools are an important setting to help us ensure children are receiving their vaccinations. Some vaccines (Flu and HPV) are delivered in schools by the Health Board's School Immunisation Team. In order to do this effectively and successfully, the team need to work with schools to firstly ensure the information gets to families about vaccination opportunities, and to also arrange and secure the dates for the vaccination sessions.

Currently, some schools are also the setting for an **MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) vaccine catch up campaign**, where the number of pupils in the school who are up to date with vaccinations is below 90%. This campaign is enabling us to vaccinate children who have missed their MMR doses, and therefore offer protection to them and their families.

The Health Board works closely with schools across Cardiff and Vale, and has done so for many years, but we need even more collective action if we are to reach the level of vaccination needed to fully protect our population. **We need schools to help us by:**

- Confirming dates for the school based immunisation programme to be delivered, and **protecting those dates** in the calendar
- Providing a **suitable space** in the school for vaccines to be given to children
- Offering **opportunities for promotion and education** around vaccination, both when the school programmes (Flu and HPV) are delivered, but at other times to raise awareness, both to pupils and families, such as in relation to the current MMR campaign
- **If capacity allows**, contacting parents directly to discuss with them the importance of MMR vaccination for the health and education of their children (the Health Board can provide a list of unvaccinated pupils)

For further information about childhood vaccination, see the Health Board's [website](#).

For further information about measles and MMR, see Public Health Wales [website](#).

Cardiff and Vale Health Board produced this video to provide some useful information about childhood vaccination. [English](#) [Welsh](#)





Janine is retiring!



We would like to Congratulate Janine Hoare, our Governor Support Administrator on the news of her retirement in July 2024. We are sure that you will all want to join us in wishing her the very best for this next chapter in life; a wonderful relaxing retirement and lots of joyous time to spend with family and friends.

Janine has played a central role within the Governor Support Team in the Vale since its inception in 1996. The commitment and support she has given to the GSU is second to none and will certainly be missed, and not easily replaced.

Thank you so much Janine for your years of Service.
We wish you all the very best for a long and happy retirement.



Protecting your family online; A Parent's Guide to Cybersecurity.

Through working with colleagues in policing at the Regional Cyber Crime Team, the LA safeguarding team, led by Jason Redrup has been able to secure 3 on-line sessions for parents and staff on Eventbrite.

This is a free event, set up and run by the policing Regional Organised Crime Unit, and all Vale Schools have been asked to share this with staff and parents.

In this comprehensive webinar, parents and guardians will gain essential knowledge and tools to safeguard their family's online presence.

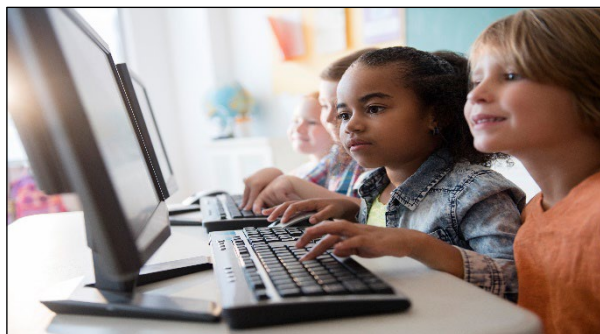
Dates/Times:

- 19th July 2024 12.00pm
- 24th July 2024 10.00am
- 31st July 2024 3.30pm

Registration Link

[Protecting Your Family Online: A Parent's Guide to Cybersecurity Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)

Please do share this event widely with parents and carers.

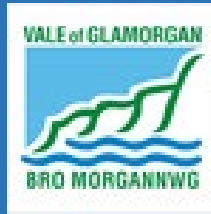


Free Webinar – Climate Change

[Climate Literacy 101 \(apolitical.co\)](#)

Tuesday July 16th 2024 – 4pm to 5pm

Join expert speakers as they cover fundamental climate concepts and provide practical steps for applying your understanding of climate to your role. Click on the link above to register.



Active Travel School Plans in Wales – an update

We are delighted to announce that to date, **over 200 schools across Wales have created an active travel school plan**, with approximately 100 schools currently engaged in the process of creating their own.

In January, the first round of Safe Routes in Communities (SRiC) funding applications linked with an active travel school plan went through. This marks a significant step forward, enabling schools across Wales to implement behaviour change initiatives and/or infrastructure enhancements.

On our [website](#), schools can find all the support they need for planning for more active schools: simple guidance, templates, case studies, classroom resources in line with the Curriculum for Wales, or direct support through one of our project officers.

While some schools contact us directly, we also welcome referrals from local authority teams.

If you know of any schools in need of support or if you are considering submitting an SRiC application for a specific school in January 2025, please let us know. We are keen to collaborate directly with schools to facilitate their journey towards active travel.

Finally, we would like to thank you for your efforts and commitment towards creating more walkable and cyclable school environments. We look forward to our continued collaboration with local authority teams across Wales.

Kind regards,

The Active Travel School Plan Team | Sustrans Cymru
Tîm Cynllun Ysgol Teithio Llesol | Sustrans Cymru





Make your Mark 2024 Results



The Vale Youth Service facilitated Make Your Mark Campaign this year and 4837 young people from across the Vale of Glamorgan voted on the topic that's most important to them. A huge thank you to all the secondary schools that supported the delivery of the UK's largest consultation for young people aged 11-18 years old through UK Youth Parliament. Schools have been shared their individual results.

[Youth Service \(valeofglamorgan.gov.uk\)](https://valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

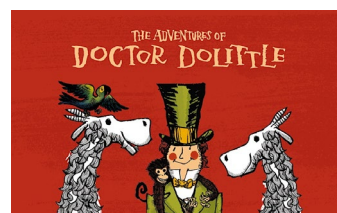
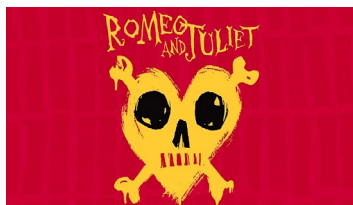
PENARTH PIER PAVILLION

WONDERFUL PRODUCTIONS OF ROMEO AND JULIET AND DR DOOLITTLE

Penarth Pier Pavilion are hosting the award-winning outdoor theatre company Illyria once again this year! Join us for 2 wonderful productions, Romeo & Juliet and Dr Doolittle. *Please bring low-backed chairs or blankets and dress warm! You are welcome to bring a picnic (no BBQs sorry), however, light refreshments will be available.*

ROMEO AND JULIET, Thursday 11th July 2024 at 7pm, tickets **adult: £18.95/child £12.95 (under 12s)** from **EventBrite**: [Open air theatre at the Kymin Gardens - Romeo and Juliet Tickets, Thu 11 Jul 2024 at 19:00 | Eventbrite](#)

DR DOOLITTLE Saturday 10 August at 3pm, tickets **adult: £18.95/child £12.95 (under 12s)** from **EventBrite**: [Open air theatre at the Kymin Gardens - Dr Doolittle Tickets, Sat 10 Aug 2024 at 15:00 | Eventbrite](#)





Vale of Glamorgan Governor Support Unit

Contact Details:

John Sparks

Head of Governor Support

Tel; 01446 709106

Email: JSparks@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Francesca Wright

Senior Governor Support Officer

Tel; 01446 709125

Email: fwright@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Janine Hoare

Governor Support Administrator

Tel; 01446 709107 JHoare@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

VSGA has an email address that you may contact us on. It's VSGA@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or alternatively you can contact VSGA by post at: VSGA Governor Support Unit, Learning & Skills Directorate, Vale of Glamorgan

VGSA Management Committee 2022-24

The Management Committee is comprised of elected Governors plus the two parent Governor Representative (one each from the Primary and Secondary Sectors)

No	Name	School
1	Mr P Cate	Jenner Park Primary
2	Vacancy	Vacancy
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 W Hennessey	Rhws Primary
7	Mrs C Hunt	St Nicholas C/W Primary
8	Mrs S Jenkins	St Andrews Major C/W Primary and St Cyres Comprehensive
9	Dr C Lee	St Cyres Comprehensive
10	Cllr J Lynch-Wilson	Llantwit Major Comprehensive
11	Dr M Price (Chair)	St.Richard Gwyn RC High School
12	Mr D Treharne	Llansannor C/W Primary
13	Mrs T Vaughan-Taylor	Cowbridge Comprehensive
14	Mr O Williams	Ysgol Sant Baruc
15	Cllr M Wilson	Fairfield Primary & Victoria Primary

Parent Governor Representatives (PGR's)

Parent Governor Representative Primary – L Barrowclough- Llandough Primary School

Parent Governor Representative Secondary – G van de Burgt – Whitmore High School