

Ysgol Aberconwy

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

YSGOL
ABERCONWY



**Please check our website for further information:
www.aberconwy.conwy.sch.uk**

**Email us at:
openevening@aberconwy.conwy.sch.uk**

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LANGUAGES AT ABERCONWY

Which languages can my child study at Ysgol Aberconwy?

Pupils study English, Welsh, German, French, Mandarin and Spanish at Ysgol Aberconwy. Pupils study French **or** German as a modern foreign language at KS3. Pupils are able to opt for Spanish, French and German at GCSE and A Level.

Does my child get to choose which Foreign language they learn at KS3?

Pupils study either French or German depending on which tutor group they are placed in. If families have a strong preference they should make the school aware during the transition process.

Will my child learn a language if they have ALN?

All pupils are given the opportunity to and are encouraged to study every subject at KS3 if they are able to.

Are there opportunities to practise the foreign languages learned abroad?

Pupils studying languages at Ysgol Aberconwy have the opportunity to practise those languages on school trips organised by the modern foreign languages department.

My child has made great progress in developing their Welsh Language skills in the primary school. Will they be supported to continue with this at Ysgol Aberconwy?

All pupils study Welsh at Ysgol Aberconwy to the end of KS4. Some pupils that attended Welsh medium primary schools or come from a Welsh speaking background are able to continue with this and are able to study Welsh as a first language from year 7 onwards. These pupils are also able to study PBL bilingually in year 7. The French and German lessons are taught using both Welsh and English to help pupils to develop the skill of translanguaging. All year 7 form tutors are Welsh speakers and encourage the use of Welsh in and around school.

How does the school develop pupils' Welsh identity?

All pupils develop their Welsh language skills during their time at Ysgol Aberconwy. They are provided with opportunities to learn about and be a part of Welsh traditions like the school and Urdd Eisteddfod and the St David's day celebrations. Year 7 are able to take part in the annual trip to Glan Llyn where they're able to use the Welsh language in a different environment whilst at the same time making new friends. All pupils have access to 'Y Caban' which is a social space for pupils to use during the lunch break where they are able to practise the language while taking part in fun activities with school staff as well as external agencies like the Urdd and Menter Iaith.

We have recently moved into the area and my child doesn't speak any Welsh. Will they still attend Welsh lessons?

All pupils study Welsh at Ysgol Aberconwy up until the end of KS4. The Welsh classes are set according to ability. The Welsh department have an excellent reputation and all pupils make progress over the key stages.

CLASSES AT ABERCONWY

Will my child be in the same house as their siblings?

Pupils become a part of one of the four houses when they join Aberconwy: Llugwy, Crafnant, Dulyrn or Hiraethlyn. Pupils were traditionally placed in the same house as their siblings but in response to feedback over the last few years, parents have said that they feel it is more important that they are placed in the same group as friends wherever possible. The transition team visit the feeder primaries in the Summer term and pupils are able to name a friend that they would like to be in the same class with. Parents are given the opportunity to state a preference in the Welcome booklet that is given out in the Summer term.

Are the children set in Year 7?

Pupils start the year in mixed ability groups in their form groups. They are set in English and Maths between the October half term and Christmas. The sets are decided based on reading scores, internal assessments and the baseline testing that all pupils complete at the start of year 7. Pupils are set in Welsh from the start based on the teacher assessments from the primaries.

SUPPORT AT ABERCONWY

What support is there if my child is struggling?

We have an excellent pastoral system at Ysgol Aberconwy. Each year is linked to a Head of Year and a mentor that will guide and support your child and their well being during their time here at the school. The mentor is a non-teaching member of staff that is available during the school day should your child need their support. The Head of Year and mentor form good relationships with pupils and their families to ensure that each pupil is able to achieve their full potential.

My child has ALN. How will they be supported at Aberconwy?

We will discuss your child's progress and any additional learning needs with the primary school as part of the transition process. If your child has ALN, our ALNCo will visit the primaries to gather information and to begin the process of planning to support your child when they arrive here with us. The ALNCo will share information and strategies with the teaching staff at Aberconwy to ensure that your child is supported effectively. They will also arrange to meet with you to discuss your child's needs.

Ysgol Aberconwy has developed a good reputation for supporting pupils with ASD. What support is available for them?

We have developed our own resource to support pupils with ASD called 'PONTIO'. Through discussion with the primaries a small group of pupils are identified for Pontio registration which means that they will register in Pontio rather than with their form group. This gives them the opportunity to plan for change and to organise themselves for the day with the support of Pontio staff at the start of each day. A wider group of students have access to Pontio during the day and are able to access Pontio if they become overwhelmed in a lesson, need decompression time or have a scheduled toolbox session where they can work with Pontio staff on particular areas that they would like to develop like communication or organisation skills. Pontio is open at break and lunch for pupils that don't enjoy being on the school yard.

What is Tegfan?

This is the County's ASD provision that is a part of Ysgol Aberconwy. Access to Tegfan is through the County's ALN moderation process. Tegfan meets the needs of pupils with ASD or have neurodevelopmental difficulties and who struggle to access mainstream school. Tegfan staff work closely with Pontio staff to support pupils and to provide the best opportunities for pupils whilst they are with us at Ysgol Aberconwy.

What is ABCD?

ABCD stands for Aberconwy Base for Children with Dyslexia, the Conwy County secondary school dyslexia support provision which is a part of Ysgol Aberconwy. Pupils are allocated a place in ABCD through the county's ALN Moderation Panel. ABCD pupils attend mainstream lessons, with some in-class support, as well as having some individual specialist tuition within the ABCD resource. Ysgol Aberconwy has held CReSTeD (Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic pupils) status since 2007, and is the only Local Authority in Wales to hold this prestigious award.

What do I do if my child is being bullied?

If you are concerned that your child is being bullied you must encourage your child to report it. They should speak to their mentor or form tutor in the first instance. You can also contact your child's mentor or head of year. They will look into your concerns and will follow the school's protocols to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

What is the School Gateway App?

This is the school's App for communicating with parents. You are able to make payments using the App and you are also able to access your child's attendance record, their behaviour and achievements log, your child's report as well as school messages. Information about logging into the App will be shared with parents during the transition week.

Will Ysgol Aberconwy support my child's transition?

The transition process will begin in the summer term of year 5 where pupils from the feeder primaries are invited for a taster day at Ysgol Aberconwy. The transition team will visit the primaries in the Autumn term of year 6 to share information about the school. We will then spend some time with the primary school teachers gathering information about your child in order to ensure that they have the best start here at Ysgol Aberconwy. The ALNCo will also visit the school and attend annual reviews for those pupils that have additional learning needs. A transition week usually takes place in the first week of July.

What will happen during transition week?

All year 6 pupils that are allocated a place at Ysgol Aberconwy will be invited to attend the transition week that normally takes place at the start of July. Information will be sent to the primaries in advance regarding transport, uniform and school lunches during the transition week. There will be a carefully planned induction programme including the use of the canteen, meeting the form tutor, a tour of the school a treasure hunt and an introduction to some of their lessons. The Head of Year and mentor will spend some time with pupils discussing routines, the timetable and uniform during the week. A parents meeting is held at the end of the week giving parents an opportunity to meet the form tutor and key staff.

How will I get the information about all these activities if my child does not attend one of the main feeder schools?

Once you have completed the admissions form and your child has been allocated a place at Ysgol Aberconwy the information will automatically be shared with you. We will also be in contact with your child's primary school in the spring term of year 6. If you would like to be included in our mailing list before this please contact the school with your contact details.

How do I get involved with school and supporting my child?

It is helpful in the early days if you are able to help your child to plan and organise themselves for the day ahead until they get used to the new systems. Look at their timetable with them the night before and ensure that they have the right equipment and books in their bags. Pupils will begin to use TEAMS to complete their work and homework and it is important that you support them in finding their way around this. Support your child to meet deadlines and to complete their homework to the best of their ability. Planning time and space to do this will make things easier for them. Ensure bedtime routines and a healthy diet will give them the best start to be able to focus and engage with school effectively. Contact your child's mentor if you feel you need to let us know about something that is worrying your child. They will also contact you if we have any concerns. The relationship between home and school is very important in ensuring your child's success at school.

Are there any afterschool clubs?

There is a homework club that runs every night until 4:15 where pupils have access to the computers and the internet if they need it to complete work. The homework club is staffed by support staff who are available to help your child if they are struggling with a particular task. There are a wide variety of other clubs at Ysgol Aberconwy and your child will be informed of days and times by their form tutor once they start at Aberconwy. These will usually be posted on the school calendar too. Some of the clubs run at lunchtimes and others afterschool. Some examples of the clubs available are Crochet, F1 Challenge, Sports clubs, Gardening club, Languages, Y Caban, Chess.

How much homework will my child receive?

Your child will initially be given homework in their PBL lessons and this will be increased slowly over time. Homework in year 7 has been planned carefully to enable your child to get used to all the changes and the new systems that are in place in the secondary school. This will support them in learning how to organise themselves and in becoming more independent as they move to secondary school.

What if my child is struggling to do the homework?

If your child is struggling to do the work it is very important that they see their teacher as soon as possible. Try to avoid leaving this to the day that it is due in, where possible. Your child can discuss this with the mentor if they are worried and the mentor will be able to support them. There will be staff to support them with their work in the homework club too.

What is PBL?

PBL stands for 'Project Based Learning'. All year 7 pupils rotate between five different projects during the year and will learn a range of new skills within each of these projects. The projects include the Environment, Forest schools, Robots, China and Festivals. In the Robots project, for example, they will develop their ICT, Science and Design & Technology skills and will be involved in some programming, research, designing, making and electronics activities.

What happens if my child gets an afterschool detention?

Parents will be informed in advance if their child is issued an afterschool detention and they will be issued with a bus pass if they need it to get home. Pupils finding themselves in this situation are a serious cause of concern for the school and for parents and this is something that should be discussed in some detail at home.

LUNCHTIME AT ABERCONWY

How does the lunchtime work at Ysgol Aberconwy?

Pupils are able to have their lunch in the canteen, at the sandwich bar or from Cafe 6. Pupils are able to sit down with a meal in the canteen but are able to buy paninis, baguettes, pizza etc from the sandwich bar and Cafe 6.

The canteen and Cafe 6 are both open at break as well as lunchtime. There is a water fountain in the canteen where pupils are able to fill their own bottles.

How do I pay for my child's lunches?

We have a fingerprint system at Ysgol Aberconwy. This is an excellent way to help pupils to manage their money and to avoid having to carry it around with them all day. Pupils are able to check their balance on the machines in the canteen and Cafe 6 as and when they need to. Parents are able to make direct payments through the School Gateway app, pupils are able to add coins to their account on a daily basis or pupils are able to place larger amounts or cheques in the post box in the canteen. Coins show up on their account immediately and larger amounts need to be posted before break so that the money shows up on their account by lunchtime on the same day. Pupils select their food and then use the fingerprint machine by the till.

Is my child able to bring a packed lunch?

Pupils can choose to buy their lunch at school or they can bring their own packed lunch. They can change their plans on a daily basis. If your child decides to bring a packed lunch they will be able to eat it in the canteen with the other pupils or they can sit on the picnic tables on the yard if the weather is nice. Some pupils choose to eat their lunch in Pontio and Tegfan too.

My child has food allergies?

Any information about any allergies your child may have is shared with the school through the Welcome booklet that we ask year 6 parents to complete in the summer term. Information about allergies is passed to the canteen manager and the details are recorded on your child's account. This will pop up on the screen at the till when your child pays for their food. The menus for the canteen can be shared with parents in advance and any specific requests related to your child's allergies can also be discussed in advance.

How much is the school lunch?

If pupils want to buy a meal deal which includes a main meal, a dessert and a drink then this costs approximately £2.75. Pupils can just buy the main meal or can purchase a baguette or sandwich instead and have the option of bringing their own drink/snacks.

My child is entitled to free school meals? How will this work?

Pupils that are entitled to free school meals will use the finger print system in the same way as everyone else but they can only purchase their free school meal at lunchtime and not at break or breakfast time. They are able to purchase a meal deal at lunchtime. If you would like your child to be able to purchase a snack at break or a breakfast before school starts they will need to add money to their account for this purpose.

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

My child is worried about getting lost?

When your child starts at Ysgol Aberconwy, all the other year 7 pupils will be in the same position and will need to find their way around the school. Other pupils and staff are very helpful and will direct them to where they need to be if they get lost. They will be provided with a map of the school and will take part in a treasure hunt activity on the first day which is designed to help them to find their way around the school. They will also initially be met by student helpers and staff on the yard and will be guided to their classrooms. We understand that this is one of the biggest concerns that all pupils have and have put lots of things in place to make it easier for them. Parents will be very surprised at how quickly they adapt to their new surroundings!

What do I do if my child is absent?

We are very proud of the excellent attendance of pupils at Ysgol Aberconwy and encourage pupils to attend 100% of the time. Pupils who have an excellent attendance record give themselves the best chance to achieve excellent results and to become confident individuals. Pupils struggle with friendships groups particularly in the early days if they are absent from school. If your child is too unwell to attend school we expect parents to contact the school to inform us of the reason for absence. Pupils are encouraged to make routine dental and doctors appointments outside of school hours.

What if my child misses the bus or is late to school?

Pupils will need to report to the main reception if they are late to school and this will be logged by your child's mentor. Any concerns about persistent punctuality and attendance issues will be discussed with families.

We want to go on a family holiday during term time. What do I do?

Family holidays during term time will not generally be authorised. The school does not encourage parents to take their children out of school during term time. In exceptional circumstances a form can be requested from the school reception and an application can be made to the headteacher.

GETTING ORGANISED

What equipment does my child need?

Your child will need a school bag to carry their books to and from school. They will need a pencil case and will need pencils, ruler, rubber, compass, protractor, pens, calculator, colour pencils. They will need to bring their PE kit on the days that they have PE and will need to bring their cooking ingredients on days they are cooking in Food Technology.

Can I get a copy of my child's timetable?

A copy of your child's timetable will be given to them during the transition week to give them a little time to get used to it before they start in September. They will be given another copy when they start in September. A copy of the timetable is available through the School Gateway App. If your child loses their timetable they will be able to speak to their mentor about getting another copy. Some pupils take a photo of the timetable on their phones so that they have easy access to it.

How does my child find out their log in for Microsoft/Hwb?

Pupils will receive a sticker with their log in details when they start at Ysgol Aberconwy. They will be shown what to do in their Maths and PBL lessons.

Does my child need a computer at home or Internet access in order to do their work/homework

Pupils will begin to complete and save work in their own area on Office 365 from the first week in Year 7. They will need access to the internet to be able to complete homework on TEAMS. It is possible for them to be provided with paper copies of tasks if necessary and they will be able to access a computer in school at lunchtimes and in the homework club after school if they don't have access at home. Please make the school aware if your child does not have access to a device or the internet at home.

How do I find out about transport?

Any information regarding school transport should come directly from the local authority's transport department. You should be able to access the information and contact details you need through their website.

How do I find out about school uniform?

Information about the school uniform is available on our school website. Your child will know which form group they are in at the start of July so that you are able to purchase the correct polo shirt. There is a coloured stripe on the collar of the polo shirt which is different depending on which form group they are in.