



YSGOL GYMUNEDOL ABERDÂR ABERDARE COMMUNITY SCHOOL



prospectus

2017-18

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Head's Introduction

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am delighted to welcome you to the Aberdare Community School prospectus. Hopefully, you will find most of the information you need about the school within these pages; it will certainly give you an insight into the opportunities we provide here in order for our young people to learn, develop and prosper. This prospectus will give you a good idea of the academic, sporting and cultural opportunities available to our students as well as the array of support we have here to help ensure that students feel safe, secure and valued.



Should you decide to send your child to Aberdare Community School then I can say with confidence that you will be sending him or her to a school where the teaching and learning is of the highest quality, where our pastoral system will ensure their wellbeing and where their talents – whatever they may – will be fully nurtured. You will be sending them into a learning environment which is a genuine 21st century school with modern facilities, the space for young people to express themselves and which has excellent community links. There are few, if any, secondary schools in Wales where the environment is so well-designed as to make the educational experience of young people as enjoyable and as stimulating as that which exists here.

I am proud to say that our school is a genuine community school. We are located at the heart of the Aberdare community and we are proud to serve that community. We work hard to establish and sustain outstanding partnerships with our local primaries, colleges, community groups and, of course, with the parents and carers of our students. These partnerships help give us the best chance to provide our students with their best chance of an outstanding education.

A prospectus, though, can only ever tell part of the story. Please visit our website, our Facebook page and/or our Twitter feed to get a real time understanding of what goes on here at the school. Please feel free to telephone the school if you have any questions or, even better, to arrange a visit. Our doors are open and we welcome all.

Mr Mark Powell

Vision and Core Values

At Aberdare Community School we believe in developing the whole child.

In the 21st Century we understand that children need to attain good qualifications and we give all our pupils the chance to achieve their potential.

However, we also realise that we have to develop within each child an understanding of what it is to be a good citizen.

All of our year groups raise money for a chosen charity and we believe passionately in a 'we' not 'me' mentality, aiming to put others before ourselves.

In each year group we appoint School Council representatives, Peer Mediators and prefects to ensure that leadership skills are developed from a young age.

Community is important to us and our pupils play a full part in developing the good relationship we have with our partner primary schools as well as local residents and organisations.

As a school we participate in the Aberdare Remembrance Service, host Harvest events for the local elderly residents and our Hospitality & Catering students cook and serve them with a Christmas meal.

We have an open door policy and many schools throughout Wales have visited us to share our best practice.

Despite being a relatively new school we have already been successful in a number of regional and national competitions. We are very proud of our successes in a variety of fields, from debating, engineering and computing to the sports field. Our very talented pupils are a credit to both the school and our town and they really are putting Aberdare Community School on the map.

Our sporting successes are numerous including Solihull Schools U14 Sevens' Bowl Winners, Blues' School Cup, Valleys Cup Finalists, WRU Morgan Griffiths' Trophy Winners, Rugby Sevens' Plate Winners U14 2016.

Our aim is to celebrate and support our pupils in any area of sport or their education to be the best they can be.

For information about our school successes visit our website
www.aberdarecommunityschool.org.uk

or follow us on twitter
twitter.com/AberdareSchool

School Mission Statement

Work Hard, Dream Big, Reach for the Stars



Houses

Aberdare Community School operates a house system and pupils are put into houses on entry.

Afon

Coedwig

Castell

Mynydd

Senior Staff

Head-teacher

Deputy Headteacher

Assistant Headteacher

Assistant Headteacher

Assistant Headteacher

Assistant Headteacher

Assistant Headteacher

Director of Pupil Progress

Associate Senior Leader

Mr Mark Powell

Mrs Michelle Pearce

Mr Alun Davies

Mrs Emma Harris

Mr Matthew Jones

Mr Chris Lovell

Miss Tara Neale

Mr Steffan Williams

Mr Andy Mee

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Additional Learning Needs

Our aim is to provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for all pupils, whilst acknowledging that some children may require extra support.

All pupils have access to the full range of National Curriculum subjects. Some pupils requiring assistance with learning receive help from our specially trained staff or are supported in the classroom by Core Learning Guides or Individual Learning Guides, who may work one to one with pupils.

The school has a team of trained literacy and numeracy specialists who provide pupils with basic skills interventions. We also support pupils with English as an additional language and pupils who speak a different first language to English are given the opportunity to take a GCSE in their home language.

The school has a number of pastoral staff trained to provide pupils with emotional support. We regularly survey our learners to assess their attitudes towards themselves and school and use this information to identify pupils who may need additional help to achieve their full potential. We use a variety of in-house wellbeing interventions, such as the Student Assistance Programme, ELSA and Thrive. We also work closely with Eye-to-Eye counselling services, enabling pupils to access confidential professional counselling within the school environment.

Parents and carers are always kept informed and will be aware of any interventions their child may undertake.

The school also works with the School Educational Psychology Service as well as other agencies to provide tailored support.

We have introduced a passport system for our pupils. This is filled in by staff from our school alongside the primary school staff. The passport is intended to provide us with valuable information about each pupil.

If your child is playing an instrument well or has achieved success in an event, we want to know this so that we can make sure they continue to get the same support and opportunities they had in their primary school.

The passport contains information about your child's academic performance as well as any barriers to learning that we need to overcome with them.

Our school has two communication classes which are called ASTRA and SIRIUS. These distinct groups specialise in provision for pupils on the autistic spectrum. Entry to the unit is via the local authority. Pupils in the unit play a full part in the life of the school and are on the school roll.

Admissions

The school will admit pupils normally at age 11 up to a maximum number called the Standard Number.

Most pupils join us from partner primary schools and these children will visit us during Year 5 and Year 6 for our curriculum days that may focus on science, technology and engineering, health and well-being or Curriculum Cymreig.

We also run a number of More Able and Talented events with our partner primary schools that take place over the course of the school year.

Admissions are through the local authority but if you are moving into the area or wish to transfer during the school year, please contact us directly for more information about the process and to organise a visit to the school.



Primary Links

Transition is an on-going process and our senior team work closely with our partner primary schools.

Every year all pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in a programme put on by our school that focuses on one of the following: Health and Well-being, Sustainability and Global Citizenship or on science and technology based study.

Our Assistant Head Inclusion also visits all partner primary schools with the Progress Leader for Year 7. The visits are intended to ensure that vital information about your child is shared prior to entry.

As parents you will also have ample opportunities to visit the school and meet with the staff.

Before your child even gets here we have gathered a lot of information about them and we use this to ensure that they are challenged on entry and do not repeat work unnecessarily.

In June, prior to entry an induction event is organised allowing children to meet their form tutors and gain confidence in their new school.

Though most pupils transfer easily there are some who may find it more difficult.

Aberdare Community School has an excellent support system for vulnerable pupils and as well as the staff mentioned above our learning coaches, family engagement officer and the pastoral support assistant for Year 7 are all on hand to support your child.

In some cases, we may even suggest placing your child in the learning house which acts as a nurture unit for pupils who find transition difficult. The school has trained sixth form buddies who also help to make the move to secondary school easier

Supporting the Able and Talented

At Aberdare Community School pupils are grouped to allow them to attain their full potential.

The school runs an enrichment programme and subject leaders work with senior staff to identify More Able and Talented Pupils (MAT).

These benefit from opportunities to enrich their learning through competitions, masterclasses or through the school providing opportunities to study GCSE subjects early.

The school also supports pupils to attend open days in university and takes part in UNIQ, a programme aimed at getting pupils from state schools to red brick universities such as Oxford and Cambridge.

All pupils entering the school follow the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness with a view to them gaining a GCSE by the age of 14.

We are one of the few schools in Wales to offer this opportunity.



Buddies and Anti-Bullying

Respect for each other lies at the heart of everything we do.

Aberdare Community School is a Rights Respecting School and in our assemblies and in all our dealings with pupils we make it clear that we have a zero tolerance to bullying.

We also make sure that pupils are aware of the dangers of online bullying and if this occurs the school will involve the police and parents to ensure this stops.

Our form tutors and progress leaders are vigilant and we make sure that children who feel that they are being bullied know where to go to seek help.

The school will not tolerate bullying, intimidation or intolerance of any kind and pupils are aware that there are clear sanctions we will use to stamp this out.

We want our pupils to grow into caring and responsible citizens and therefore bullying will not be tolerated. As part of our statutory responsibility we have an Anti-Bullying Policy which can be found on our website.

Child Protection and Safeguarding

The school has a safeguarding policy and is fully compliant with all the statutory and local authority guidance to ensure that our children are safe in school.

Our school has a senior member of staff (Assistant Headteacher) who is appropriately trained and charged with the responsibility for co-ordinating child protection matters within the school, and that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of who that person is.

The Child Protection (Safeguarding) Officer is Mr Matthew Jones (Assistant Headteacher) and the Deputy Child Protection Officer is Miss Tara Neale.

They are supported by all of our Progress Leaders and pastoral staff, who are fully trained, by the local authority, to ensure that all members of our school community are safe.

Disability Access

The school acts in accordance with The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA) and the Equality Act 2010, which define a disabled person as someone who has 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

As a consequence we

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- Encourage participation by disabled person in public life and
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.

At our school we pride ourselves on the fact that all our pupils have the opportunity to develop individually and socially.

Homework

Homework is important for all pupils in our school. It allows pupils to build on the learning that is going on every day in school and helps them to develop as individual learners. All pupils who come to Aberdare Community School are expected to complete homework and we hope that you will support us in this.

The nature of homework tasks may vary and can include written tasks, research, reading, aural and oral work.

We ensure that the nature of the homework recognises the age, ability and resources available to our students. The school has a homework club that runs regularly where pupils have access to the IT facilities.

Every pupil is issued with a homework diary or planner. It is essential that all homework is recorded in pupils' planners and that parents and carers check these planners on a weekly basis to ensure that homework is completed on time.

Religious Education and Collective Worship

The day begins with a year group assembly or meaningful time spent in form rooms discussing the 'Thought for the Week'. All pupils are taught Religious Education and follow the syllabus as agreed by the local authority at Key Stages 3 and 4. In addition, Religious Studies is offered as an option at GCSE and at Advanced Level and in

both cases recruitment to these courses is above the norm. The school has no affiliations with any particular religious denomination. As a school we are committed to promoting tolerance and respect for those who have differing religious beliefs.

School Security and Pupil Safety

The safety of our children is a priority. The school has a full CCTV system that operates 24 hours a day. There is a full-time receptionist to meet and greet visitors to the school. All visitors to the school must sign in at reception and official visitors are expected to wear a badge.

The school has a full-time site manager. The school has electric doors to the outside leisure centre car park area and the school is fully fenced. Access gates to the bus bays and staff car park are locked during the day. The school is joined to our leisure centre but access is secured with card readers only issued to school staff.



The School Day

8.45am	School Commences
8.45am – 8.50am	Registration
8.50am – 9.05am	Assembly/Pastoral Time
9.05am – 10.05am	Lesson 1
10.05am – 11.05am	Lesson 2
11.05am – 11.25am	Break
11.25am – 12.25am	Lesson 3
12.25pm – 1.25pm	Lesson 4
1.25pm – 2.00pm	Lunch
2.00pm – 3.00pm	Lesson 5
3.00pm	School Ends

Uniform

All of our branded uniform (with a school logo and in school colours) is only available from our school shop.

The logo is copyrighted to us and we will take action against anyone who tries to copy this.

The uniform shop provides excellent value for money and we also re-cycle as part of our green agenda.

Girls' Uniform

School Blazer: Black blazer with school badge, only available in school.

Shirt: White shirt (NOT polo shirt)

Tie: KS3/KS4 School tie, only available from the school

Jumper: Black V-neck with school badge, only available from the school

Skirt: Straight black, knee length

Trousers: Smart straight black trousers no canvas material or slim-fit / skinny trousers

Socks: Black socks to be worn with trousers

Tights: Black tights at least 40 denier to be worn with skirts

Outer coat: Dark in colour, no hoodies or sweatshirts.

Shoes: Black shoes, no boots or trainers

Boys' Uniform

School Blazer: Black blazer with school badge, only available in school

Shirt: White shirt (NOT polo shirt)

Tie: KS3/KS4 School tie, only available from the school.

Jumper: Black V-neck with school badge, only available from the school.

Trousers: Smart straight black trousers no canvas material or slim-fit / skinny trousers

Outer coat: Dark in colour, no hoodies or sweatshirts.

Shoes: Black shoes, no boots or trainers

School Meals

The school does not allow pupils in years 7-11 off site during the day and the school provides excellent food from early in the morning.

Pupils can choose from a range of good quality and well-priced meals.

Meals are served in the main restaurant for those in years 7-11.

A staff and sixth form café is to be found on the first floor.

A privilege café for pupils in year 11 that also serves cold food is available on the second floor.

The school is committed to providing pupils with good quality, healthy options.



Assessment

We believe in working with parents and carers to support your child's learning throughout their time at Aberdare Community School. Regular and rigorous assessments ensure that we track progress, celebrating successes and identifying where additional support may be required every term.

All pupils are given aspirational target grades, based upon their previous achievements and their future potential. We use grades with all year groups as we prepare pupils for their GCSE and A Level studies. Our teachers identify core tasks for each year group which are used to assess progress. Detailed feedback is given for these assessed pieces of work, so that learners are aware of what they did well and of what they need to do to improve. Our learners are encouraged to reflect on the feedback they have been given to ensure that they understand fully how to improve their performance.

At the start of Year 7 all pupils complete Cognitive Ability Tests (CATs). They are designed to assess a pupil's ability in three different areas: verbal (thinking with words); quantitative (thinking with numbers); and non-verbal (thinking with shapes and space). We also test pupils' literacy and numeracy skills on entry, so that we can provide a

tailored support package if pupils need extra help in these vital skills. The results of these assessments, combined with your child's performance data from primary school, enable us to ensure that pupils are placed in the correct set. All pupils are placed in sets according to their ability. We regularly review our setting arrangements to ensure that pupils are placed in the right class for them.

Parents and carers are invited to one Parents' Evening per year, except in Years 7 and 11 where there are 2 scheduled Parents' Evenings. Parents and carers receive one annual full report, completed by your child's form tutor and interim reports, outlining your child's progress across all subject areas. Our Progress Leaders and Leaders of Learning are of course available to meet with parents at any point during the year to discuss any concerns around achievement or a pupil's attitude towards learning.

Pupils' achievements are celebrated at our annual Prize Evenings and through the school's rewards system. We are committed to recognising all kinds of achievements, including academic, sporting and cultural successes.

Careers Advice and Guidance

All pupils from years 7-13 at Aberdare Community School take part in a structured programme of Careers Education and Work Related learning that is organised by a non-teaching member of staff.

This is intended to prepare them as they progress through the school for the world of work..

It also provides them with the ability to make increasingly important decisions that will influence their further education and careers options. Much of this is delivered in our shut down days or in specialised events that take place throughout the school years.

Pupils also benefit from one-to-one interviews and mock interviews as well as listening to outside speakers.

The school delivers a number of courses that prepare pupils for the world of work and many pupils visit open days in Universities and Colleges of Higher Education.

More able and talented Advanced Level students are encouraged to visit and apply for places at red brick universities.

We also collaborate where possible with industry and following our school's success in the TYCO challenge – (where pupils have to turn a £1.00 investment into as much money as they can) a number of pupils attended work experience at Deloitte in Cardiff.

Medical Provision

Many teaching and non-teaching staff are first aid trained and as a parent we will contact you if we feel your child is not well enough to remain in school.

Your child's attendance is very important to us but we do ask for parents to be sensible and sometimes pupils have been sent to school who are clearly too unwell to be with us.



Information Technology and Digital Competency

Information Technology & Digital Competency is delivered to all pupils at Key Stage 3 as part of a carousel of learning alongside literacy and numeracy.

In addition, pupils have opportunities to learn about computer programming through a series of additional calendared days within the school year.

We place a huge emphasis on all our pupils becoming digitally competent and pupils have opportunities to use IT in all their subjects.

This makes the use of technology realistic and allows pupils to see how IT is used in the 21st Century.

The school is fully wireless and as well as having 2 Apple suites and 4 computer suites, each floor of the school has two laptop trolleys for use by students within all subject areas.

Sixth formers have access to their own sets of laptops and these are used mainly in the internet café which is open from 8.00 in the morning till 2.30.

Sixth form pupils are also able to remain after school to make use of the facilities and have their own printer access.

Learning Resource Centre

The school is a 21st Century learning establishment with a modern learning resource centre with access to Kindles and laptops.

Pupils are able to borrow books as well as research for information.

They are encouraged to use this but due to the size of the school pupils are time-tabled days when they may visit the library during a lunch time.



The Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Extended Learning and Out of Hours Activities

All pupils in years 9 and above are offered the chance to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme.

We already have a high number of participants in the Bronze and Gold Awards with one pupil completing his Gold Award this year.

There is a rich provision of opportunities both sporting and non-sporting outside school hours with pupils being offered the chance to take part in Engineering schemes, Rotary competitions, trips to art galleries, musical and theatrical events.

We also host a large number of after school events for pupils organised via the Youth Participation Service.

Where pupils undertake trips and activities as part of their school curriculum this will be provided free but where trips are non-statutory a charge will be made or these will not be able to run.

Pastoral Organisation and Pupil Well-Being

Pupils are placed into mixed-ability form groups at the beginning of Year 7. Pupils usually remain in these form groups, where possible with the same form tutor, until the end of Year 11. Your child's form tutor will play an important role as he or she progresses through the school. The form tutor is often the first person a pupil might turn to if they need help or guidance. Our form tutors regularly monitor pupil progress and intervene when a pupil needs additional support.

Each year group has a dedicated Progress Leader who is responsible for the pastoral care and well-being of pupils in their year group. As with our form groups, your child's Progress Leader will remain the same throughout their time

at the school. Our Progress Leaders are ably supported by pastoral support assistants, non-teaching staff who are often your first point of call should you wish to discuss any concerns you may have.

Aberdare Community School is committed to ensuring that all pupils are supported fully throughout their time at the school. In addition to the pastoral team, a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team is attached to each year group.



Attendance

Where pupils have medical conditions that prevent them from attending then the school is fully supportive.

Please ring us if your child is going to be absent so that we can authorise the absence.

Please note that we cannot support your child going on holiday in term-time except in exceptional circumstances.

We have a number of strategies in place to support pupils' attendance including our learning house facility that we use if a child has an injury/illness that would prevent them being able to move around the building safely.

Within school pupils are marked into each lesson electronically and in this way we assure ourselves to the best of our ability that pupils are present in all lessons.

The school is supported by the Educational Welfare Officer who also supports us in ensuring that pupils attend regularly and who works closely with parents and carers.

We also employ our own Family Engagement Officer who works with individual families to support our learners.

Pupils whose attendance falls below Welsh Government guidelines or who are constantly late may face penalty notices and fines.

As a school we pride ourselves on the fact that our attendance is one of the best in our family of schools.

The Learning House

This is an area within the school managed by two learning coaches.

Pupils who are having difficulties in school or need a different approach to learning might spend some of their day in this environment.

However, it is there to support learning and not replace it.

Pupils who have this support will still be expected to make progress and go to time-tabled lessons for most of their school week.

Parents and carers of pupils who have this support or indeed any other form of support will be notified.

Where a pupil is not engaging within this environment then the provision will be withdrawn and the resources re-directed.

Pupil Voice

The school has a school council and pupils from this are also represented on the Governing Body of our school.

All subjects, as part of their self-evaluation are expected to listen to learners and their views are taken into account.

The school council has a number of sub-committees that deal with specific issues including attendance and well-being.

During the school year a number of departments undergo internal inspections by the senior management team and pupil voice plays a large part in these reviews.



Sport

Sport plays a vital part in our school and the leader of learning for this subject is in charge of Health and Well-Being as Director of Sport and Health and Wellbeing.

The school organises a number of events throughout the year to support the improvement of health and fitness for all learners.

We employ both a football and a rugby coach who work with talented boys and girls to develop these skills.

We also work regularly with professional sportsmen and women, as we invite them into school to share their inspirational stories with our learners. In recent years we have been proud to welcome international footballers, rugby players and elite athletes to help raise aspiration and support our pupils with advice on nutrition, training and fitness.

The school runs an innovative sports academy for sixth form students. Students who are accepted on to this technical programme complete a BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sport, which is the equivalent of 3 A Levels. This academic qualification is supplemented by sport-specific training provided by our dedicated rugby and football coaches. There are similar opportunities in other sporting disciplines, such as hockey, netball, swimming or even golf.

The school has state of the art facilities for sport as we share the facilities of the local leisure centre, additionally we have our own multi-use games area and next year will have access to the new athletics stadium.

The sports centre houses wide screens which are used alongside iPads and tablets to enhance sports lessons and further develop pupil skills in a variety of sports including tennis, badminton, gymnastics, netball, basketball, volleyball, rounders, cricket and hockey.

All pupils have regular PE lessons on their timetable and we expect pupils to wear our sports' uniform.

Our sporting teams are incredibly successful and trips are organised on a regular basis to France, Spain, Italy and Texas.



Performance, Music and Dance

At Aberdare Community School we recognise the range of talents that pupils bring with them and the school was designed to maximise the potential of the pupils.

The school has the most amazing facilities for all of the above with a purpose built dance studio, recording studio and drama theatre.

Pupils are able to take part in a range of opportunities that take place throughout the year including the annual carol concert, Eisteddfod and musical productions.

The school offers Performing Arts and Music through the school to examination level and all our instrumental lessons are free as long as pupils contribute in our public events.



Equality

At Aberdare Community School we want all our pupils to achieve to the best of their individual ability.

Our philosophy is that everybody is given the opportunity to succeed by following a curriculum suited to their unique individual needs.

It may mean that some will have a slightly different curriculum to others but it is child led and centred.

We believe that the school has a part to play in breaking down stereotypes related to such matters as sex, race, religion and disability.

Such matters are dealt with through the formal curriculum in lessons such as our Certificate of Personal Effectiveness, PHSE days and Religious Education, but more importantly in the way in which personal relationships are managed on a day-to-day basis.

The school is a Restorative Approaches and a Rights Respecting organisation.

We will not tolerate any form of intolerance and we make every attempt to ensure pupils respect one another.

Sex Education

We believe that the purpose of sex education should be to provide knowledge about loving relationships, the nature of sexuality and the processes of human reproduction.

This should enable pupils to learn to view their relationships in a healthy and responsible manner.

Every effort is made to ensure that the message is tailored to the age and understanding of the child and that sound moral values are a part of it.

We work closely with outside agencies to deliver elements of this programme feeling that their expertise and background allows them to present this in an effective and engaging manner.

Sex Education is linked with areas of the National Curriculum.

Where this occurs pupils will learn about this in science at both Key Stage 3 and later. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from learning except for those aspects covered in our statutory courses.

Use of the Welsh Language

We are proud of our language and heritage and the commitment to the language is to be seen in many areas of the school not just in lessons.

We celebrate our nationhood in many ways including holding an annual Eisteddfod and the Welsh department organises a number of trips to Llangrannog and places of cultural interest in Wales.

Within the school you will hear Welsh spoken informally by a number of our staff and around the school there are bilingual signs.

Welsh is the first language heard when you ring us up and it is also evident on materials printed in the school.

Many of our staff speak Welsh and Welsh may be heard in assemblies where there is a bilingual focus. In addition all subjects contain a focus on Curriculum Cymreig within their schemes of work.



Procedures for Complaints

Staff are approachable at all times but should you have cause to make a complaint then in the first instance any complaint should be made to the Headteacher.

In particular requests by parents to withdraw their child from Religious Education, Collective Worship or aspects of the Sex Education Programme.

The Headteacher will acknowledge the complaint within 5 working days and where necessary if an

investigation is necessary this will be conducted either internally or with HR involvement depending on the nature of the complaint.

The Headteacher will respond to the complainant in writing or in person as soon as is practicable on completion of an investigation.

Parents may also make a complaint to the Chair of Governors at the school address.

Discipline and Behaviour

In Aberdare Community School we place great importance on the way we behave and act as members of our community.

The School Council, Governors, parents and teachers have all contributed to developing a clear code of conduct and behaviour policy.

Our Code of Conduct is clearly evident in our planners and in all classrooms and focuses on respect for others and the environment, an attitude that leads to success and good attendance.



Rewards and Sanctions

Pupils can be rewarded by:

- Verbal praise and encouragement.
- Positive written comments in exercise book and/or Planner.
- Letter or phone call home.
- Referral to Head of Learning/Progress Leader for verbal praise.
- Mention in Newsletter.
- Every week form tutors analyse the behaviour of the pupils in their form class. Any pupil who has maintained a "clean slate", which means they have not received any poor behaviour points, will receive an automatic 10 achievement points. This system means that our learners are rewarded for consistently following the school rules. At the end of each term, pupils who achieve a significant number of achievement points will be rewarded.
- Pupils can also earn individual achievement points for good behaviour, effort and good work during lessons. These are awarded by pupils receiving blue cards which are then logged on our behaviour management system. Again these achievement points are added up and pupils rewarded at the end of term.
- Being pupil of the month. In each of the year groups there will be a pupil of the month, nominated by the progress leader. The progress leader will base their decision on the pupil's attendance, behaviour and academic progress.
- Being learner of the month. In each subject there will be learner of the month for each year group, nominated by each department. The department will base their decision on the pupil's performance, effort and progress.

What will your child learn in Key Stage 3?

Pupils will take many subjects that they are familiar with including English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Physical Education, Music, Technology, Welsh, Personal, Social and Health Education and Religious Studies.

In year 7 your child will also take the following additional subjects, information technology, drama, French and a new subject called the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (COPE). More able linguists also have the opportunity to learn Spanish from Year 8 onwards.

COPE is taught for the first three years and all pupils will be able to get the equivalent of a General Certificate of Education (GCSE) by the time they are 14. In addition, we are delivering additional literacy, numeracy and digital competency (Information Technology and computing).

When your child gets to year 10 they will be able to take a range of options that will include Drama, Dance, Music, Business Studies, Engineering, Graphics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics as well as all those listed earlier.

All pupils in years 10-13 will also study for the Welsh Baccalaureate this is an excellent qualification allowing pupils to further develop a range of skills that employers wish pupils to have. The WBQ qualification will be used by the Welsh Government to judge school performance from 2017.

There will be a number of extra-curricular opportunities for your child. We offer the chance to learn a range of musical instruments including guitar and drums and we also seek to encourage those with a good voice to develop it by employing a voice coach.

These opportunities are free to all pupils. There are regular sporting fixtures and the school offers a huge range of sporting opportunities outside of the normal rugby, hockey, football, netball, basketball, and cricket.

We make use of the swimming pool and we have good links with other sporting organisations including our local golf clubs.

The school also offers a number of out-of-hours classes including Astronomy, Photography, including for older children the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

In year 7, pupils are grouped into 3 bands Omega, Gamma, Delta and within these pupils are streamed to aid their learning. The school holds an open evening for prospective parents of pupils in year 5 and 6 early in the autumn term.



What will my child study at Key Stage 4?

Towards the end of Key Stage 3 your child will continue to have careers guidance and advice about subject choices that are suited to their likely career interests as well as their ability.

At this point children are able to make decisions about their learning pathways and we want this to be a real discussion between parents/carers, the child and the school.

An options evening is held early in the spring term and parents are also able to read through an options booklet that outlines the subjects available and how they are examined.

We encourage parents to come to the school to learn more about the subjects that are on offer.

Considerable help and guidance is given to our pupils when they are making these choices and each child has an individual interview with a careers' advisor as well as one of the senior leadership team.

Every effort is made to ensure that pupils get their subject choices but clearly when choices are involved this may not always be possible.

During year 10 pupils have the chance to go out on work experience and all pupils study for the Welsh Baccalaureate which is an essential part of their level 1 or 2 awards.

In a few cases pupils may be offered an alternative provision and for part of their learning be supported by our learning coaches.

Welcome to our Sixth Form

Pupils who wish to study in our sixth form traditionally need to gain at least 5 good GCSEs including English and Maths.

However for certain subjects including the separate sciences we insist that pupils have at least a B grade to start the relevant Advanced level course.

Sixth formers have a separate internet coffee shop shared with the staff which is open from 8.00 am till 2.30pm.

The sixth form courses are run in partnership with our other partner secondary schools in the Cynon Valley and pupils are able to choose courses in these schools should they wish.

However as a school we offer 28 sixth form courses that cover sciences, humanities, languages, sport, music and performing arts.

Sixth formers also have access to designated laptops and their own printer for school use only. The school recording studio, Apple Mac suites and other state of the art facilities mean that many of our children opt to undertake subjects in their home school.

Please note that admission to the sixth form is via the head-teacher and the senior team. Our provision is non statutory. Therefore, we reserve the right to deny access to our sixth form if there have been attendance or attitudinal issues during key stage 4 - or if we feel that we cannot provide a full timetable appropriate to a child's needs. Interest in our sixth form from outside our catchment is increasing due to the quality of the provision.

Sixth form courses and option choices are wide and varied and for up to date information we advise you to come to our open evening held whilst children are in year 11 or to look at our website.

Please note that we do give priority to those pupils who have successfully completed English and mathematics GCSEs.

We do provide resit classes for those who narrowly miss a C grade but the time allocation for these is much less than that offered in year 11. It is also important to note that many university places are offered now to students who have at least a B grade in English and Mathematics.

Sixth Form Sporting Opportunities

As a school we run our own Sports Academy Programme, specialising primarily in rugby and football development. Talented boys and girls in these sports can apply to join the academy.

Pupils study conventional Level 3 courses in Physical Education alongside the Welsh Baccalaureate and undertake a technical programme in their chosen sport intended to support their development as elite athletes.

In addition we have now extended this provision to pupils who may wish to study traditional

Advanced levels but who are talented in a sport such as golf, swimming, weightlifting or cycling.

Pupils study their chosen subjects and as a school the Director of Sport will oversee the organisation of a bespoke technical programme.

For some pupils a scholarship may be available. For more information on this please contact Mr Andy Price Director of Sport and Health and Well-Being.

Student Guidance

Pupils are allocated to form groups and are expected to be in school for registration at the start of the day and to attend all their lessons.

The form tutor works in the same way as those lower down the school and aims to get to know your child academically and socially.

Tutors and subject teachers monitor attendance and progress. Pupils who fail to make sufficient progress will be expected to attend a meeting with the school and parents/carers will be asked to attend.

Pupils who then fail to meet targets for improvement may be asked to leave school.

Our Head of Sixth form is Mrs Karen Leyshon and the Assistant Head-teacher attached to the sixth form is Mr Chris Lovell.

Please do not hesitate to contact them for further information or for a tour of the school if you are thinking of your child transferring to us post 16.

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For more information about our school please get in contact:
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