



Ysgol Hendrefelin

Summer Term Newsletter 2026

Learning today for a better tomorrow | Dysgu heddiw, ar gyfer gwell yfory

Welcome

Dear All,

Since becoming Acting Headteacher this term, I have been very grateful for the support, encouragement and kindness shown by our families and wider school community. It has been a busy, positive and rewarding term across the school, and I have felt very proud to see the enthusiasm, resilience and progress shown by learners each day.

There has been much to celebrate this term. Learners have enjoyed a wide range of valuable opportunities both in and beyond the classroom, including visits, practical learning experiences and enrichment activities that have helped to build confidence, independence and enjoyment in learning. It has also been wonderful to see the continued progress learners are making in communication, wellbeing and personal development, as well as the pride they take in their achievements.

As always, our school community is strengthened by the positive partnership we share with families and I would like to thank you for the continued support you give to the school and to your children's learning. It is greatly appreciated by all of us. I look forward to building on the successes of this term and to working together in the months ahead.

With best wishes,

R. Duford

Acting Headteacher

Key dates

Term dates September 2026 to July 2027

Term	Begins	Half term	Ends
Autumn 2026	1 Sep 2026	26 to 30 Oct 2026	18 Dec 2026
Spring 2027	4 Jan 2027	8 to 12 Feb 2027	19 Mar 2027
Summer 2027	5 Apr 2027	31 May to 4 Jun 2027	20 Jul 2027

INSET days (school closed to learners)

- Monday 1 September 2026
- Friday 23 October 2026
- Friday 30 April 2027

The school will confirm the remaining three INSET dates.

Bank holidays

- Good Friday: 26 March 2027
- Easter Monday: 29 March 2027
- May Bank Holiday: 3 May 2027
- Spring Bank Holiday: 31 May 2027

Dates this term

- INSET day: 21 July 2026
- Sports day: 14/07/2026
- Leaver's Assembly: 03/07/2026

Unit Snapshots

Learning Support Centre

It has been a busy and rewarding summer term in the Learning Support Centre. Learners explored the enquiry question, “How would you change our world?”, working together to share ideas and present their thinking to the class. We are proud of the confidence and independence learners have shown.

What we have been learning

Learners worked collaboratively on the enquiry question and presented their work to their class, building confidence in speaking and sharing ideas. In food and nutrition, learners designed, made and evaluated a healthy meal. In physical education, they developed athletic skills through sprinting and endurance activities.

Progress this term

There has been clear evidence of raised confidence, with learners showing greater independence when attempting set activities. Reading assessments within the provision showed good progress, with learners improving their reading age over the term.

Trips, visitors and enrichment

Learners enjoyed a visit to Folly Farm this term, alongside trips to Trecco Bay, Afan Forest Park and Bryngarw Park across the year. They took part in mountain biking at Afan Forest Park and distance swimming at the Afan Valley pool. A local authority advisor visited on several occasions to support staff with Zones of Regulation approaches.

Whole-school initiatives

Learners took part in Healthy Schools activities, including designing and preparing a healthy meal. Learners and staff also supported a colleague who ran the London Marathon to raise money for Dementia Research.

Community links and transition

Staff and learners liaised with the team at Afan Forest Park to plan different cycling routes. Transition has been a focus for two learners leaving at the end of the summer term, with staff working closely with the receiving school to support a smooth move as they take their next step.

Our priorities for learning

Our priority has been reading and comprehension, giving learners regular opportunities to improve their reading skills and understand what they have read.

Celebrating achievements

Learners received certificates for improved attendance and for distance swimming at the Afan Valley pool.

Thank you

Thank you for your continued support this term. We are very proud of all our learners and look forward to building on their progress. We wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer.

With best wishes,

The Learning Support Centre Team

Horizon Centre KS3

It has been a busy, enjoyable and rewarding summer term in Horizon KS3. This term our learning has linked to the whole-school enquiry question, “Is change always a good thing?”. Learners have taken part in a wide range of practical and meaningful experiences that helped them explore new ideas, build confidence and develop skills for learning and everyday life. We are very proud of the enthusiasm, curiosity and resilience learners have shown.

What we have been learning

Learners explored the history of coal mining in the South Wales Valleys, including what life was like for miners and how mining shaped local communities. Our visit to Big Pit brought this learning to life. In science and technology, learners looked at wildlife, biodiversity, fossil fuels, renewable energy, sustainability and plant growth.



In literacy, they developed story writing, poetry, persuasive writing, speaking and listening, and built confidence in Welsh through simple conversational patterns. In mathematics, learners worked on addition, subtraction, money, time and statistics using hands-on activities and manipulatives. In expressive arts, they explored charcoal drawing, music, rhythm and drama, and through Jigsaw they focused on relationships, children's rights, friendship, emotional regulation and staying safe. Cooking, gardening, Forest School and community activities supported independence and confidence.

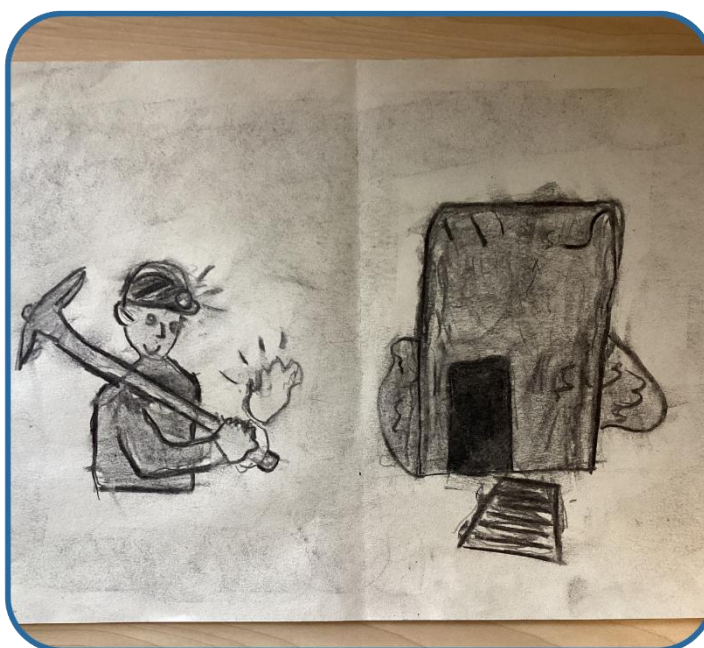
Digital learning

Learners enjoyed coding, animation, photography, data handling and online safety. They used Micro:bits to create programmed dice as part of cross-curricular work, developing sequencing, pattern recognition, debugging and logical thinking.



Progress this term

Many learners have shown growing confidence in communicating their needs, sharing ideas and taking part in structured interactions with adults and peers. There has been positive progress in reading, comprehension and vocabulary, and encouraging gains in coding and digital problem-solving. Staff have noted improvements in independence, focus, emotional regulation, social interaction and group participation, with learners making progress towards their individual IDP outcomes.



Trips, visitors and enrichment

Learners enjoyed Big Pit, Forest School, gardening, cinema visits, drama and music workshops, community outings, upcycling and a residential at St Madoc's. Year 9 learners took part in a surfing programme at Caswell Bay and Year 8 learners enjoyed sessions at Down to Earth. Visitors included workshop leaders, occupational therapy-informed input, environmental learning support, a student teacher and Jo Goddard from Go Learn Explore, who led a session on food origins, food miles and sustainability.



Whole-school initiatives

Horizon KS3 contributed to Eco Schools, Healthy Schools and Rights Respecting Schools. Learners took part in sustainability, recycling, gardening, litter-picking, children's rights, emotional wellbeing and healthy lifestyle activities.

Community links and transition

Strong links with families, community groups, therapists and partner schools continued to support learners. Learners took part in community activities and transition opportunities for incoming learners, including after-school transition clubs and planned events that help new learners settle and build positive relationships.

Thank you

Thank you for your continued support this term. We are very proud of all that Horizon KS3 learners have achieved and look forward to building on this progress.

With best wishes,

The Horizon KS3 Team



Horizon Centre KS4

As we reach the end of the summer term, we are pleased to share highlights from Horizon KS4. It has been a positive term, with learners making strong progress, gaining valuable experiences and reaching important milestones.

What we have been learning

Our work has centred on developing life skills to support learners now and in the future. Learners focused on independent living skills, communication and interaction, functional literacy and numeracy, work-related learning and employability, and social and emotional wellbeing. We are pleased to have achieved the CWRE Quality Award, recognising the strength of our work-related education.



Qualifications and next steps

Learners have worked towards qualifications suited to their individual pathways, including Entry Level and Entry Pathways courses in English, Maths, Science, Humanities, Creative Media and Healthy Living, alongside vocational options in Motor Mechanics and Hairdressing.



All learners have completed their courses and will leave with recognised qualifications. One learner has been accepted onto a mainstream college course at Llandarcy, and another has been offered a placement with a local construction company after impressing during work experience.

Progress this term

Improvements in reading and comprehension have been pleasing, with some learners making excellent gains through targeted interventions. Support for wellbeing has remained a priority, helping learners develop confidence and resilience.

Trips, visitors and enrichment

A highlight of the term was Work Experience Week. Every learner took part in a placement or vocational activity linked to their interests, including working with the NPTC Talent Team and Youth Service, construction site visits, employability sessions, a horticulture project for Year 10 learners and an employer visit to Aberafan Beach Hotel.



Learners also enjoyed a Firefighter for a Day experience, the Duke of Edinburgh Award and an industry insight session in horticulture with a gardening project.



Community links and transition

Learners have prepared for their next steps, with visits to Neath College Group and other transition opportunities helping them feel confident about the future.

Thank you

We are very proud of everything our learners have achieved this term. Thank you for your continued support, which plays such an important part in their success. We wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer.

With best wishes,

The Horizon KS4 Team

Aspire Centre

As we come to the end of the summer term, we would like to share the learning, progress and achievements across Aspire. It has been a busy and positive term, with learners developing confidence, independence, communication skills and readiness for the next stage of their journey.

What we have been learning

Our curriculum focused on the themes of Respect and Connections, explored through the enquiry question, “How can we help everyone join in?”. Learners thought carefully about inclusion, disability awareness, accessibility, children’s rights and belonging, often making links to their own experiences.

We were delighted to welcome some special visitors from Guide Dogs. The children enjoyed learning about the important work guide dogs do, how they support people with sight loss, and the incredible training these amazing animals receive. The visit provided a wonderful opportunity for pupils to develop their understanding of inclusion, independence, and the importance of showing kindness and respect towards others. A big thank you to our visitors and their guide dogs for sharing such an inspiring experience with us.



Learners also explored ecosystems, food chains and food webs, and how living things depend on one another. Communication remained a priority, with staff developing communication-friendly approaches through visual supports, communication boards, signing, structured language strategies and direct teaching. Our older learners worked towards qualifications in English, Maths, Science, ICT, Humanities, Personal Development, Preparing for Work and Duke of Edinburgh activities.

Progress this term

Learners have made meaningful progress from their individual starting points. This can be seen in improved attendance, increased independence, stronger communication, better emotional regulation, growing confidence and greater participation in school and community life. Health and wellbeing sit at the heart of our provision, with learners developing emotional literacy, self-awareness, regulation strategies and positive relationships.

Trips, visitors and enrichment

This term offered a wide range of enrichment, including outdoor learning, creative activities, sport, wellbeing sessions and life skills. Our visit to Folly Farm was a highlight, and staff were proud of the resilience, flexibility and maturity learners showed in a busy public environment.



Whole-school initiatives

Learners contributed to the local community through Food Bank work, litter-picking and the allotment project alongside our education social worker and learners from Theodore Road. We marked Autism Acceptance Month, Deaf Awareness Week, Mental Health Awareness Week and World Environment Day, giving learners the chance to explore identity, inclusion, wellbeing, equality and respect.

Community links and transition

Transition has been a major focus. Aspire introduced personalised transition live stories to help learners and families become familiar with classrooms, staff, routines and key areas of the school before visits take place. Feedback from families, schools and learners has been very positive, and this approach has helped reduce anxiety and build confidence.

Thank you

Thank you for your continued support throughout the year. Aspire remains a nurturing and ambitious provision because of the strong relationships between learners, families, staff and the wider community. We are very proud of everything our learners have achieved and look forward to continuing this journey together.

With best wishes,

The Aspire Team

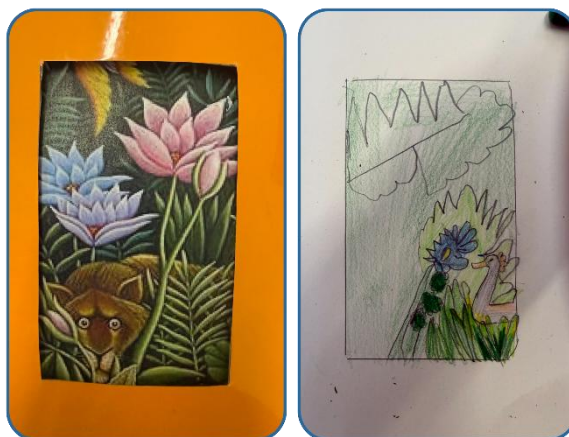
Theodore Road

It has been a busy and rewarding summer term at Theodore Road. Our KS3 learners have explored the enquiry question, “Can one person change the world?”, looking at people who have made a difference and how their own actions matter. We are proud of the curiosity, effort and growing confidence learners have shown.

What we have been learning

Learners researched people who changed the world and created fact files using ICT and literacy skills, including the work of Nelson Mandela and racial equality. They celebrated David Attenborough’s 100th birthday, explored conservation and plastic waste and looked at how public figures support charities such as free school meals. Learning linked to the World Cup through countries, flags and designing team kits, and to current events including a rocket launch to the moon.

Learners identified countries and oceans, studied habitats with a focus on hedgehogs and made bird and bug houses in design and technology. In mathematics, learners developed time and money skills through a play tuck shop, shopping visits and cookery. In art, they explored colour and repeated patterns, created work inspired by Henri Rousseau and studied Welsh landscapes inspired by Welsh artist Rhiannon Roberts. Forest School continued to support outdoor learning.



Digital learning

Learners used ICT to research and present their work and created their own digital books about Forest School using Book Creator.

Progress this term

Learners have engaged in more activities and behaviour has improved across the unit. Zones of Regulation lessons have helped reduce behaviour incidents, and learners have grown in confidence as their knowledge has increased. Some learners are re-engaging with reading and sustaining attention for longer, a learner joining from another provision has settled well and taken part in all activities, and others have made strong progress in speech and language.



Trips, visitors and enrichment

Learners enjoyed a wide range of experiences, including Big Pit, a residential to West Wales, a visit to Cardiff City Stadium, bushcraft with Ancient Boar, surfing, swimming, the allotment at the Gnoll and sessions at Bulldogs gym. We welcomed a number of visitors, including our local police officer, school nurses for immunisations and wellbeing and support partners such as MIND.

Whole-school initiatives

Theodore Road took part in Eco Schools and Healthy Schools. Learners worked on a food waste reduction scheme with Tesco, celebrated Earth Day and supported healthy lifestyles through cookery lessons and a move away from fizzy and sugary drinks.

Community links and transition

Year 9 learners have visited Velindre daily to prepare for their next step, and phased transition has supported a learner's return to a mainstream setting. Year 6 transition visits have been arranged with schools, learners and families, with opportunities to visit our provision and to meet each other at shared Forest School sessions. Phased integration will continue from September.

Celebrating achievements

Learners were recognised at our annual awards for creativity, numeracy, literacy, attendance and commitment, curiosity, problem solving, eco work and sportsmanship.



Thank you

Thank you for your continued support this term. We are very proud of all our learners and look forward to building on their progress. We wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer.

With best wishes,

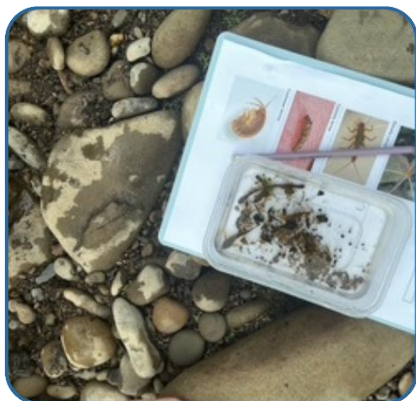
The Theodore Road Team

Velindre

As we come to the end of a busy and rewarding summer term, we would like to share the work, achievements and experiences of our learners in the Velindre KS4 BESN unit.

What we have been learning

This has been an important term for our Year 11 learners as they prepared for and completed their examinations. Learners worked towards a broad range of qualifications, including GCSEs in English, Maths, Science and History, alongside vocational and Entry Pathway courses tailored to their strengths and interests.



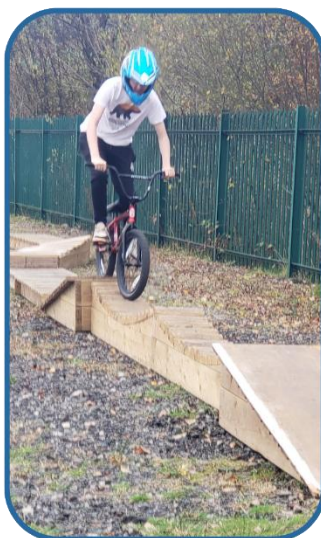
Our Science and ecology project has been a highlight, with learners visiting the beach to investigate pollution levels and collect data for a community-focused project. Year 10 learners worked with a master's student from Cardiff University, learning about habitats and how to identify the health of ecosystems through fieldwork and real scientific techniques.

Digital learning

A focus this term has been ICT, with learners developing spreadsheet skills as part of their Entry Pathways qualification. These skills are already being applied in other subjects, particularly Science, where learners have been collecting and analysing data.

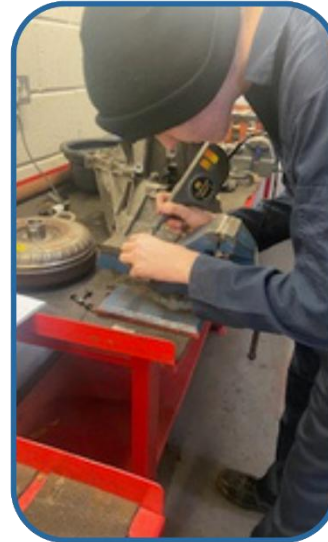
Progress this term

Learners have shown resilience, determination and growing confidence through developing strong revision habits and effective exam skills. Wellbeing has remained a priority, and it has been good to see learners supporting one another. Learners have also learned different revision strategies, helping them feel more organised and confident in their studies.



Qualifications and next steps

We are delighted to celebrate a number of achievements. Several learners are close to completing their CSCS cards, supporting future employment. A group of learners have passed their welding course, and others have passed their hairdressing course. Our Year 11 learners have worked closely with the Careers Service and the Legacy Team to plan their next steps, visiting colleges and training providers to make informed choices. We are confident they are well prepared and wish them every success.



Thank you

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We are very proud of all our learners and the progress they have made this term. We wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer.

With best wishes,

The Velindre Team



Residential Unit

The summer term has been a positive and successful period, with a strong focus on learner wellbeing, personal development and enjoyable activities.

Life in the unit

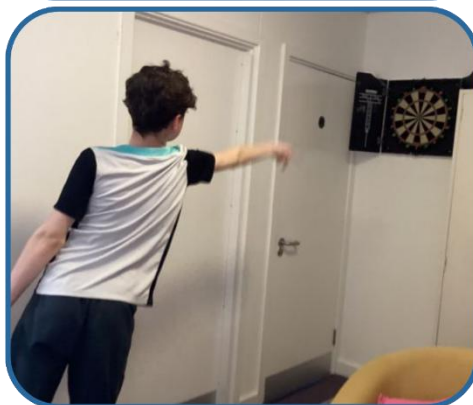
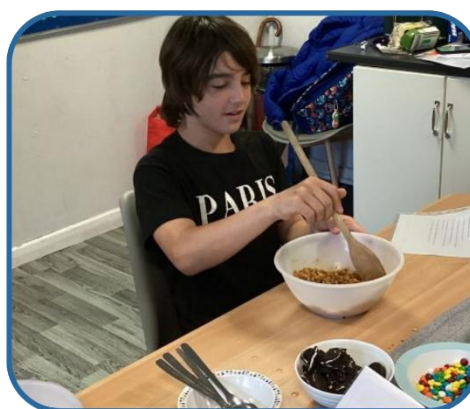
We said farewell to four Year 11 learners who move on to college in September, and we are proud of their achievements.



Two new learners have joined the Tuesday girls' group and settled well, forming positive friendships in a kind and supportive environment. The group continues to show respect and support for one another.

Activities and enrichment

Learners have enjoyed cooking, golf, cinema trips and a darts tournament. These opportunities have supported confidence, creativity and teamwork.



Inspection and feedback

We were pleased to receive very positive feedback from our recent Care Inspectorate Wales inspection. Inspectors highlighted strong relationships and noted that learners feel happy, safe and well supported.

Looking ahead

A Residential Open Evening for parents and carers will be held on 16 July, offering the chance to visit, meet staff and celebrate learner achievements. Learners are also looking forward to a Hawaiian themed celebration and a trip to Swansea Arcade to end the term.

Thank you

It has been a successful term with many opportunities for learners to develop skills and confidence.

With best wishes,

The Residential Team

Transition News

This term, we placed a strong and caring emphasis on transition across our school so that every child felt confident, prepared and supported as they moved forward. We recognised that transition could bring both excitement and uncertainty, so our approach focused on building familiarity, strengthening relationships and ensuring learners felt safe and secure in their new environments. Staff worked closely together to share information, plan visits and create opportunities for learners to get to know new classrooms, routines and adults in a calm and positive way.

We also recognised how important it was for families to feel included in this process. Throughout the term, we shared updates, offered opportunities for parents to connect with new staff and provided guidance on how to support children at home. Our aim was to make each step of transition gentle and reassuring so that learners left the year feeling proud of what they had achieved and ready to take their next steps with confidence.

Awards

The annual awards ceremony, 16 June 2026, was a great success and celebrated learner achievement across all sites and provisions. Awards were presented for Attendance and Commitment, Curiosity, Creativity, Problem Solving, Literacy, Numeracy, Seren y Gymraeg,

Digital Champion, Community Champion, Most Improved, Resilience, Endeavour, Sportsperson of the Year, Residence, Head Learners and Deputy Head Learners.

These awards provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the many strengths, talents and achievements of our pupils. From effort, determination and resilience to creativity, leadership and kindness, each award recognised the unique ways in which pupils contribute to our school community. It was a proud and uplifting occasion, reflecting the progress, commitment and personal growth shown by so many learners throughout the year.

Eco Warrior News



We had an incredible week celebrating Eco Day as part of The Great Big Green Week. Learners and staff embraced the chance to explore sustainability and understand how small actions can make a big difference. A highlight was our whole school Power Hour, where classrooms switched off electricity and learners enjoyed board games together, building communication, teamwork and enjoyment without screens.

Learners showed real commitment to caring for the environment. Surplus fruit from our Food Share Scheme was used to make marmalade, while groups took part in litter picking to keep our grounds and local area clean. KS3 learners also worked with Jo Goddard from Go Explore Learn, taking part in engaging activities focused on sustainability. Throughout the week, learners explored topics such as carbon footprints and net zero and took part in creative eco activities including designing carbon neutral games and making bird feeders and bee saucers.

We are also proud to have achieved the Eco Schools Platinum Award, recognising the hard work and dedication of our whole school community. Our Eco Committee has played a key role in leading positive change and promoting sustainable habits. We are very proud of our learners and look forward to continuing our eco journey together.

Y Senedd – Our School Council



Our school council, Y Senedd, gives learners a strong voice in the life of the school. This term, learners met with the local authority's digital engagement lead to talk about the school joining the Digital Engagement scheme, sharing their views on how technology can help learners be heard.

Learners also began planning our end of year Fun Day, putting forward ideas for activities the whole school can enjoy. They discussed new ways to reward and celebrate improved attendance, thinking about what would motivate their classmates.

We are proud of how our learners represent their peers and take an active part in shaping school life.

Criw Cymraeg

Next year, we will be working towards our Siarter Iaith Bronze Award, a national scheme celebrating the Welsh language in our school. Our plan has four simple jobs: See Welsh, Speak Welsh, Play in Welsh and Love Wales. You will see Welsh walls in every class, a daily Shwmae and Diolch, yard games in Welsh and Dydd Gŵyl Dewi celebrations. On Wednesday 14 May, our Criw Cymraeg travelled to Ysgol Ystalyfera for a conference with Criwiau from eight other Neath Port Talbot schools. They shared "Our Welsh Plan" and closed by asking everyone in the room to try one Welsh word that day. We would love you to try the same at home.



Sports Teams

Our boys' team represented the school brilliantly at a football tournament in Llanelli on 5 June, held at Ysgol Pen Rhos. They secured an impressive third place, winning three matches, drawing one and narrowly losing two. Osian Morgan delivered an outstanding performance, scoring eight goals across the tournament. All the boys showed great determination and teamwork throughout, giving their all and making Ysgol Hendrefelin very proud.

Our girls' team also put in a fantastic performance during their football match in Woodlands on 22 May. In a thrilling end-to-end game, they achieved a 9–9 draw, with Lilly Anna scoring an incredible eight goals. The girls worked hard for each other, showed real enjoyment and team spirit and represented the school with pride.

A selection of learners had an exciting opportunity to take part in the Junior NBA festival at Aberystwyth University on Friday 12th June. Throughout the day they competed against other ALN schools from across Wales, taking part in friendly matches and showcasing their skills on the court.

The learners had a fantastic time and demonstrated excellent sportsmanship, resilience and teamwork in every game they played. Their positive attitudes and determination helped make the event a great success, creating lasting memories for everyone involved.

Road Safety

During the last week of term, KS2 and KS3 learners will benefit from a visit by the local authority's road safety team, who will teach bike and scooter safety. To include every learner, we have invested in a class set of scooters and safety equipment to complement our school bikes. Learners of all abilities can now build confidence, stay safe and take part together.

Our Year 11 Leavers



To our Year 11 leavers, this is your moment. You have worked hard, grown in confidence and made your mark on our school community. As you move on to your next steps, whether that is school, college, training or work, carry everything you have learned with you. Be proud of how far you have come. Stay kind, stay curious and keep believing in yourself. We will miss you and we cannot wait to hear about all you go on to achieve. From all of us at Ysgol Hendrefelin, the very best of luck. Pob lwc.

Whole-school news and reminders

Attendance

Whole-school attendance is 77.1%, up nearly 1% on last year. Three of our four sites improved: Bryncoch up 1.7%, Aspire up 6.6% and Theodore Road up 10.2%. Velindre has dipped, mainly due to new pupils on phased integration plans and a few reduced timetables. Many Velindre pupils held or improved their attendance, and three earned a local authority certificate and gift card for their progress.

Rewards and challenges keep pupils motivated. Our term 5 Funday Friday Challenge saw over 30 younger learners enjoy an activity of their choice. Attendance assemblies run all year to celebrate excellent and improving attendance.

Reminders for families

- **Report an absence:** call the school office on 01639 642786.
- **Uniform:** white polo shirt, navy jumper, dark grey or black trousers or skirt, black shoes. No hoodies. Order online at <https://www.sportec.co.uk>.
- **Medication:** hand any medication to staff with a completed Medication Consent form. It must be in date and in its original container. Learners are not permitted to carry their own medications.
- **Phones and devices:** learners hand devices to staff on arrival. Staff store them and return them at the end of the day.
- **Parking:** if you bring your child to and from school by car, please be considerate of local residents and ensure that driveways are always kept clear.

As we approach the summer break, families may find the following links helpful for advice on keeping children safe over the holidays. These include guidance on water safety, sun and heat safety, online safety and road safety, and all are either specific to Wales or highly relevant to families in Wales.

- [Water Safety Wales](http://www.watersafetywales.org.uk) – advice on staying safe in and around water across Wales: www.watersafetywales.org.uk
- [Swim Wales – Water Safety](http://www.swimwales.org/tag/water-safety) – information for families, including summer water safety messages and Swim Safe Cymru: www.swimwales.org/tag/water-safety
- [NHS 111 Wales – Sun Safety](http://111.wales.nhs.uk) – advice on sunscreen, shade, hydration and protecting children in hot weather: 111.wales.nhs.uk

- [Welsh Ambulance Services – Sun and Heat Safety](#) – practical summer advice on heat, dehydration and when to seek help: ambulance.nhs.wales
- [Hwb – Keeping Safe Online](#) – Welsh Government guidance and resources to help families support children to stay safe online: hwb.gov.wales/keeping-safe-online
- [Road Safety Wales](#) – useful road safety information and resources for families across Wales: www.roadsafetywales.org.uk

Looking ahead

As we close for summer, our plans for next term are already set. We want strong attendance from day one. Every day in school helps your child learn, build friendships and feel settled. We are also carrying our Welsh forward. Our Criw Cymraeg will keep leading the way as we work towards our Siarter Iaith Bronze Award. Learner wellbeing stays our priority.

There is plenty to look forward to. Your child will start the autumn term on September 2nd, 2026. They can expect new learning, familiar faces and a warm welcome back to our school.

Thank you for your support this year. Have a happy and restful summer. We look forward to welcoming your child back in September.

Thank you for your continued support.