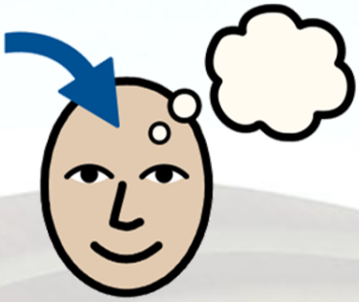
Ysgol Maes y Coed



School Prospectus



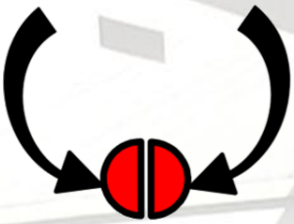


Learning Together





Growing Together





Making a Difference

Main Road, Bryncoch, Neath, SA10 7TY

TEL: 01639 643648

E-mail: office@maesycoedspecial@npt.school

Head teacher: Miss Ceri Hopkins

Chairperson of Governors: Mrs Bev Winstone

Welcome to Ysgol Maes y Coed, a Community Special School

Welcome to Ysgol Maes y Coed

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to our wonderful school; Ysgol Maes Y Coed.
I am very proud to lead such a successful schoolwhich I have done since Sept 2009. The children are amazing, it makes coming to work extremely rewarding and worthwhile.

We are especially proud of the progress pupils make from their staring points and that the children are happy coming to school
We have a warm, caring, and supportive atmosphere. We are a place where pupils can be safe & happy and can learn & play.

We are a large special school, and make sure each child is supported to learn, fulfil their potential and develop as young people… prepared to enter society as happy, responsible members of their community.

We have 118 pupils from ages 3 to 19 years all with a statement / IDP of severe or Profound learning needs.

I would urge you to visit. I am truly confident you will find this a welcoming and supportive school, with staff that listen, consult and actively encourage your involvement. I know that you will be impressed by the quality of education and care we can offer your child.

At our school we:

- Encourage Pupil Voice
- Have small classes with high staffing ratios
- Focus on the individual needs of our pupils
- Have a dedicated staff: Our School is highly staffed with a well-established, experienced, relevantly trained and qualified team which listens, consults with you and actively encourages your involvement.
- Provide opportunities for our pupils to experience the community safely and successfully
- Use the outdoors to deliver lessons
- Raise pupil self-esteem and confidence. Pupil wellbeing is a priority at our school

- Work with Speech & language therapists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists and other professionals for the personalised education of each pupil

- Help prepare our pupils for life, to enable them to be as successful as possible in the outside world.

- Pupils are taught in small class groups organised as far as possible according to age. This provides optimum opportunities for individual attention, ensuring all pupils feel important members of their class.
- There are 14 classes at the school, each with a teacher and teaching assistants who work closely with physiotherapists, speech therapists and occupational therapists to meet the pupils' very special needs

  We also have a Post 16 satellite provision based at Afan College.
-

- Have wonderful facilities including a hydrotherapy pool, sensory rooms, a wheelchair swing, basket swings, climbing frames, trampolines, a Poly Tunnel, sensory gardens, a Cruyff Court and grounds all in a secure and safe environment

If you would like to have a chat about the school or visit us please contact us on the school number 01639 643648.

LOCATION

Ysgol Maes y Coed is in Bryncoch in the County of Neath Port Talbot.
The school is next to the grounds of another special school, Ysgol Hendrefelin, local houses and open land.
The view from the school is very pleasant, looking towards hills and woodland.

THE GOVERNING BODY

Ysgol Maes y Coed is managed by a Governing Body of 7 people with a wide range of experience who represent the Local Authority, the school staff, parents and the local community.

The Governors meet regularly throughout the year to discuss all aspects of school life. During the school year, the Governors present their Annual Report to Parents and parents have the opportunity to discuss any aspect of school life with them.

SCHOOL CONTACTS

Headteacher: Helen Glover

Deputy Head Teacher: Cath Tucker

Teachers with Additional Responsibilities:

Ali Rodenburg

Rachel George

Esther Casey Howells

Lauren Gratland

Kieran Brown

School Nurses: Rhian Fraser

Emily Richards

Chair of Governors: Bev Winstone

Vice Chair of Governors: Lynsey Roles

Safeguarding

There are standard procedures that we must follow is any concerns are raised about the safety and wellbeing of a child. These are documented in the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures. These procedures are available to all via the free app.

If staff have any concerns about a child, the designated safeguarding Lead - Helen Glover will follow the procedures. These procedures are the same for every school in Wales. We have a duty to act promptly to ensure our pupils are safe and free from harm.

If you have any concerns involving a member of staff, you should speak in the first instance to the Designated Safeguarding lead Helen Glover.

Our Safeguarding policy applies to all staff governors and volunteers working in school without exception.

ALL Staff receive annual Safeguarding training.

SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT



Safeguarding & Child Protection.

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils. We endeavour to provide a safe welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

Designated Senior Teacher for Safeguarding & Child Protection:

Ceri Hopkins

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy available on request. It can also be accessed on the school website.

THE SCHOOL DAY

8.50am	– School begins / Registration
10.30am	– Break
11.45am	- Dinner for primary pupils
12.30pm	- Dinner for secondary pupils
1pm	– Afternoon school begins
3pm	– School ends – taxis arrive.

Lists of term times and holidays are available from the school office.

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Although the school uniform is not compulsory it is encouraged and it is preferred that pupils wear sweatshirts and polo shirts in the standardised colours. Our school polo shirts are turquoise or navy blue, sweatshirts are navy blue and all depict the school badge.
Items of the uniform can be seen at school and purchased from the school office, or from Macron Store Neath Abbey or online from Tesco. Information on how to order uniform can be obtained from the school office.
It is important that your child's clothing has their name clearly written inside.

ATTENDANCE

Parents are expected to inform school the reason for absence as soon as possible on the first day that their child is away. All absences are checked on the first day of absence. Staff telephone parents to discuss any concerns.

TRANSPORT

Transport for pupils to and from the school is provided by the Local Education Authority. This may be by taxi or specially adapted vehicle for pupils who use wheelchairs. Escorts are provided by the Authority and special seating can also be arranged.

ADMISSIONS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Admission to Maes Y Coed is on the recommendations of a multi professional ALN panel.

The local Authority funds a set number of places at the school, this is reviewed annually.
Children are admitted from 3 years. Children with severe / complex/ profound learning needs are considered as a priority for admission.
All pupils have their additional learning needs protected by a full statement / IDP which identifies Ysgol Maes y Coed as the best school to meet their needs.
When a new pupil starts at Ysgol Maes y Coed, an information exchange meeting is held for school staff, parents and any other agencies involved.
Parents are welcome to visit the school at any reasonable time, by appointment with the Head teacher.

Pupils may start at school at any time throughout the school year.

Staffing

Ysgol Maes Y Coed staff team includes:

Senior Leadership Team:
Headteacher
Deputy Headteacher
Professional Learning Leads for;
ASD & BEHAVIOUR
CURRICUUM
COLLEGE SATELLITE/ ACCREDITATION / WELLBEING

Class teachers
Parental Engagement Team
Specialist Teaching Assistants – Behaviour, Forest School
ELSA Support
Relationship Based Play & Lego Therapy Support

Teaching Assistants – L3 & L2 in every Class
Mid-day supervisors

Resource / IT Manager
School Bursar
Office Manager
Office Administrative Assistants
Pool Attendant & Lifeguard
Caretaker

PARENTAL PARTNERSHIP

We value parents/ carers as partners in their child's education and we will do all that we can to respect your wishes and views, encouraging the sharing of skills, experiences and knowledge of your child with us.
Our aim is to build a two way relationship with all parents / carers fostering honesty, mutual respect and working together towards the same goals.

- Contact with parents is made on a regular basis either through Class Dojo, telephone calls or parental visits to the school.
  All members of staff value their contact with pupils' parents.
- Partnership with parents helps to inform day to day teaching as well as to plan individual teaching programmes.
- Parents are welcome into school at any time although they should check first that the particular member of staff they wish to speak to is available.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT
We have an 'Open door' policy and parents / carers are invited to a range of events throughout the year including, Parents evenings to discuss your child's progress, review targets and discuss 'what's next.' Coffee mornings, school fayres, Santa / Easter trails, Bake off's and assemblies to name but a few!

Parental Engagement
Many sessions are organised throughout the year, encouraging parents / carers to join in sessions on a range of subjects / issues of interest e.g role of the Physiotherapist, role of the Speech therapist, Wellbeing for carers, mindfulness for parents / carers.

Parent Governors
There are 3 Parent Governors on the school's governing body. They represent the views of parents / carers on the governing body. Any parent can arrange to see any member of the governing body in addition Parent Governors are always happy to offer advice, support and information about the school or are able to put you in touch with the relevant member of staff.

Parent Teacher Friends Association
The PTFA is open to parents / carers / staff and to anyone who is interested in the work of or school. The main aims of the PTFA are to bring parents, friends and staff together through informal social activities, to support development of the school and help introduce new families. To raise money for the school to provide equipment, facilities and other educational items or services that would not be available from other funding.
There is a committee of parents / carers and staff who co-ordinate the work of the PTFA. Anyone who is interested in joining the PTFA should contact Cathy Bartlett in the school Office

Communication between Home and School

Class Dojo.
Following feedback from Parents/carers we now keep in touch via the texting app; Class Dojo. Parents find Dojo far more efficient, easier to use and it doesn't get lost between home & school! Only in exceptional circumstances do we still use a Home/School diary.
When your child starts at YMC you will be supported to install the Class Dojo app. Information about Class Dojo can be obtained from Sam Gallagher our IT/Resources manager.

Teachers 2 Parents T2P (Texting Service)
This too has proved invaluable in supporting our communication with Parents /carers and staff.
Information about T2P can be obtained from Cathy Bartett in the school office.

To help us provide the best possible service and to ensure all parents / carers have access to all the relevant information sent home via Class Dojo & T2P it is essential that we have up-to-date mobile numbers for all parents / carers involved in the child's life. If mobile numbers are changed please ensure we receive the new numbers.

Community focussed schools
Schools play an important role within their community, they not only provide education for pupils and create a community spirit amongst parents / carers but they also have the opportunity and facilities to reach out to the community. We aim to provide a range of services and activities to meet the needs of our pupils and their families and the wider community.

The school makes use of the facilities of Bryncoch village and the town of Neath, which is only five minutes away.
The school has its own adapted vehicles with wheelchair access and wheelchair space so that all pupils can travel safely.
Pupils visit shops, cinemas, sports facilities, swimming pools etc. as well as taking part in many local events within the community.

SCHOOL SECURITY and use of CCTV
Every effort is made to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and visitors to Maes Y Coed.
There is a coded entry system to the school ensuring the doors are kept closed., doors leading to the outside of the school are key coded and pupils are always closely supervised.

All visitors must sign in via the school's sign in system and are asked to wear a badge for the duration of their visit. Visitors will be asked to read our safeguarding poster when they sign in at Reception.
CCTV cameras operate in the car park, playgrounds and the main foyer. They are used to ensure everyone is kept safe.

Our CCTV System is used to
Help maintain an environment for pupils, staff and visitors which supports their safety.
Deter against crime towards persons, school buildings and property.
Assist in the identification and prosecution of persons having committed an offence.

Images will be stored for a period of 30 days unless an incident arises which requires longer retention in line with the specified purposes of the CCTV system. Once the retention period has expired, the images will be erased.

Health & Safety (H&S)
Our H&S Co-ordinator is Cath Tucker (Deputy Head) and is supported in this area by Cheryl Nesbitt our School Bursar and Ruth Weaver H&S Officer with the Local Authority.
All staff receive regular H&S training and updates including Manual andling, First id and Medical procedures.

Staff driving the school minibuses have undergone specialist training and ave met the appropriate standards.
Risk assessments are carried out for all activities to ensure the safety of pupils and staff on and off-site.
The School's H&S officer s also supported by the governing body H&S sub committee and our school caretaker.

SCHOOL MEALS
The school promotes healthy eating through managing its own kitchen. Fruit, milk and water are available throughout the school day. Children have the choice of either a hot nutritious meal from our school meals service or bringing a healthy packed lunch into school. Current menus are available on the school website: Dinner money should be paid into school via the online system ParentPay and paid in advance of meals being taken, in accordance with NPTCBC policy.

Please Contact Louise Crowley in the School office regarding the set up of the cashless system or advice regarding menus.

Many pupils are eligible for free school meals and the forms to apply are available from the school office.

CHARGING AND REMISSIONS POLICY
Our Charging and Remissions Policy operates under the NPTCBC guidelines that are taken from the Welsh Office Circular 4/89

No charge is made for any activity that takes place during school hours except for cookery where a child takes home whatever has been made.
Parents / Carers are invited to make voluntary contributions towards trips and other school time activities to help cover the costs of transport, admission, break time snacks etc.

No child will be left out of an activity if his her parents cannot or will not make a contribution but, in common with other schools, if insufficient contributions are made then the trip or activity may not take place.

Parents will be charged for board and lodging for residential trips.

Equality

We recognise the diversity within our school and the community it serves. We promote inclusion both within school and the wider community. We value and utilise the social, linguistic and cultural experiences that our pupils and staff bring to our school.

At Ysgol Maes Y Coed we aim to provide a happy, caring environment in which all children can feel confident and able to learn. We seek to foster an environment of mutual respect and support between all staff, pupils, parents and carers and the wider community.

Our school is committed to eliminating any unlawful discrimination on grounds of Race, Gender, Transgender, Religion or Belief, Disability or Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy or Maternity Marriage or Civil Partnership by creating an environment where every individual, regardless of ability or background, is able to participate and is valued fully as a member of the school community.

Stereotyped ways of thinking are the result of ignorance and may result in low self-esteem and limited aspirations. The school values and encourages involvement of people from all sections of the local community and through this involvement aims to provide positive images.

Any language or behaviour which is racist, sexist, homophobic, disablist or potentially damaging to any group will not be tolerated and will be challenged and monitored.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE
The Governors recognise that it is important that concerns and complaints are dealt with appropriately and aims to ensure that if anyone has a concern or complaint it is taken seriously and dealt with quickly, fairly and thoroughly.

If parents / cares have a concern they are encouraged to talk with the Head teacher or other members of staff. We will do our best to resolve any issues immediately rather than use this process.
However this policy and procedure is in pace for you to use if your concern is not resolved informally or of a more serious nature.

- We will try our best to solve any problems.
- If the problem is not solved then an official procedure may be followed as detailed in the School Complaints Policy.

Medical Matters

This school has a full-time nurse who can support pupils, staff and parents with any medical issues.
The nurse develops a Healthcare Plan for each pupil requiring one.
The nurse will administer medication prescribed by the doctor and labelled clearly with child's name & dosage, to pupils as necessary.
Parents are asked to complete a form listing any medication and must tell school if there are any changes.
Medicines are kept in a locked cupboard or fridge in the nurse's room.

Regular medical appointments are arranged in school for pupils and parents are asked to attend.
Multi-disciplinary clinics are also held at school on a regular basis. These meetings involve a wide range of professionals who may be involved with a particular pupil.

When a pupil becomes ill or unwell at school we will do our very best to contact you and ask you to collect your child. Many of our pupils are extremely vulnerable and because of this parents / carers are requested not to send their child into school when suffering from colds, flu, throat infections etc.

If your child has sickness or diarrhoea then we ask you to ensure that your child has been clear of symptoms fir 48hours before they return to school. This is to help prevent the spread of such infections within school.

Our school nurse: Rhian Fraser can be contacted at the school

Family Details:
It is vital that we have up-to-date records of telephone numbers, emergency contacts etc should we need to contact you during the day.

Parents / carers moving home changing telephone numbers must inform the school as soon as possible.
Where parents are separated / divorced and both parents have parental responsibility we require the contact names, telephone numbers and addresses of both parents.

Additional Learning Needs

The Additional Learning Needs & Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET) sets out the new statutory support system in Wales for children and young people with special needs.

The term ALN replaces 'special educational needs' (SEN) , covering all children and young people with additional needs, regardless of how complex or severe they are.
This means ALN will cover a whole spectrum of needs, from so-called 'high functioning' autism, through to serious global learning delays/difficulties and major physical disabilities.
The ALN Act aims to help children and young people with ALN overcome barriers to learning and reach their full potential.

A key element of the ALN Act is the provision of an Individual Development Plan (IDP) for every child who has ALN, regardless of the severity.

The IDP will replace Statements. IDPs apply to children and young people from birth up to the age of 25, as long as they are in education.
This will ensure consistency throughout the ALN system, and protect the provisions and rights of all children, regardless of the extent of their needs.

The IDPs will set out not just the alternative learning provision (ALP) that pupils need at school, but also provisions by healthcare services, social services and any other agencies involved in their care and support.

The IDP will be a flexible document that will be reviewed and changed as a child's needs develop and change over time. A vital element of the IDP is that that the views of young person, as much as possible, and their parents are considered.

PUPIL CENTRED REVIEW PROCEDURE

Each pupil's progress is reviewed at an annual Person Centred review meeting to which parents and other professionals are invited.

Reviews are pupil focussed; the pupil's statement of educational need / IDP is reviewed to check that each pupil's needs are met.

During the meeting reports are discussed, aims and objectives are set for the forthcoming year.

School Review Reports are sent to parents and associated professionals before the meetings and parent's comments are actively sought.
Parents are also invited to visit school during Parents Evening to discuss their child's Individual Education Plan with the class teacher.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

- We provide each pupil with an individual education plan, which is continually updated and reviewed.
- Every pupil is assessed and then an individual education plan is designed.
- Parents are invited to comment on and contribute towards this plan, this is very important to us.

BEHAVIOUR

We work hard to ensure all our pupils are happy and able to achieve their potential. We provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to work and play together, to be sensitive to each other's needs and to develop the skills of social interaction and independence.

At Ysgol Maes y Coed we set high standards for behaviour:

- Staff use praise and reward not punishment.
- Pupils are encouraged to work hard, to identify behaviours and set personal targets for improved behaviour.
- Pupils are rewarded for their achievements.
- Pupils are encouraged to identify how they are feeling using Zones of Regulation throughout each day.
- If behaviour difficulties arise, they are dealt with on an individual basis and a Personal Support and Behaviour Management Plan is devised.
- If necessary, school staff can call upon the educational psychologist and other professionals to help assess and design a programme to help manage a pupil's behaviour.
- Parents are involved at an early stage as co-operation between home and school will increase the chances of success.

Our Behaviour Lead is Ali Rodenburg. She is supported by Louissa Golding (Behaviour Support specialist Teaching Assistant). Between them they provide support to pupils and staff to develop personalised behaviour plans.

They support and model strategies / approaches within the classroom, as well as reviewing incidents, debriefing pupils and staff following incidents. They also monitor our behaviour reporting system on SIMS.
Both Ali & Louissa meet with parents / carers to discuss pupil support and behaviours. Ali co-ordinates MDT meetings and provides reports for the Governing Body and various professionals involved with individual pupils.

Policy available on request & can be accessed on school website.

THE CURRICULUM

As a school we decided to move across to the Curriculum for Wales for all ages with effect from September 2022. We are working with colleagues throughout the nation to develop and implement a suitable whole school approach. A curriculum for our learners at Maes Y Coed.

The curriculum provides a 'broad and balanced' teaching programme that incorporates the six areas of learning set out in the new curriculum.

The Curriculum for Wales has been developed to fulfil four key purposes. It aims to produce children who will become:

- Ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives.
- Healthy, confident individuals ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.
- Enterprising, creative contributors ready to play a full part in life and work
- Ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the World.

The Curriculum for Wales has six areas of learning.

- **Expressive arts** incorporating art, dance, drama, film and digital media, and music. It encourages creativity and critical thinking, and includes performance.
- **Humanities** incorporating geography, history, RE, and social studies, based on human experiences and will also cover Welsh culture.
- **Health and wellbeing:** this covers the physical, psychological, emotional and social aspects of life, helping students make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing and learn how to manage social influences. It will include PE.
- **Science and technology** incorporating biology, chemistry, physics, computer science, and design and technology.
- **Mathematics and numeracy: i**n the early years, this will involve learning through play. In later stages, it will include working both independently and collaboratively with others.

- **Languages, literacy and communication:** this will include Welsh and English, literature and international languages.

In addition, literacy, numeracy and digital competence skills will be embedded throughout all curriculum areas.

The new curriculum recognises that learning is an expedition rather than a straight line. There is recognition that learners progress at different rates and take different paths to get to the next stage of their own individual learning journey.

The learners at Maes Y Coed receive a bespoke and individualised curriculum based on their needs and barriers to learning.

Each class teacher bases their termly planning around a topic focus; from here the teacher will look at the individual learning needs and plan accordingly for the pupils within their class. Topics also take into account key dates, religious festivals and promote a sense of Welsh identity whilst welcoming and celebrating other cultures.

Further information about the Curriculum for Wales and assessment procedures can be obtained by contacting Rachel George – Curriculum lead within our school

Relationships and Sexuality education

RSE is mandatory in all maintained schools. Parents are no longer be allowed to withdraw their children from these lessons.

We ensure that the content of our RSE programme and the strategies used meet the wide range of complex needs of our learners. The focus is on building relationships based on mutual trust, and developing mental and emotional wellbeing, resilience and empathy.

We work closely with parents / carers with sensitivity and understanding.

The Foundation Phase

The Foundation Phase takes place both indoors and outdoors and allows children to learn through play.

The curriculum gives every child the opportunity to be at the centre of their learning. Your child's interests will be taken into account and they will be encouraged to make choices about their learning.
Qualified staff will be observing children, working with individuals and small groups, to extend and develop the learning. This results in a learning experience which is practical, fun and full of hands-on activities which are known to develop positive attitudes to learning.

POST 16 CURRICULUM

Where appropriate, Post 16 pupils access our satellite base Ty Margam at Afan College. This provision supports the transition for students into Afan after finishing at Maes Y Coed**.**

- The curriculum for older pupils develops skills to prepare for life after school.
- The 14-19 curriculum is broad in order to provide for the different needs of our pupils.
- The 14-19 curriculum is accredited by Agored Cymru. All pupils, where appropriate leave school with recognised accreditation for their achievements
- Work experience placements are arranged for some pupils. They are fully supported by school staff so that they gain positive benefits from the experience.
- Pupils visit a variety of places of work to experience 'World of Work'.
- Our pupils' personal and social development is very important and we prepare our pupils to live as fully as possible within their community and society at large.

TRANSITION PLANNING

- Pupils may stay in school until the July following their 19th birthdays.
- It is important to plan for post school life - Teachers, parents and other professionals work closely together to ensure that decisions are made about a pupils future needs and to prepare pupils for the transition to life after school
- When a pupil reaches Year 9, representatives from other services are invited to attend reviews. This may include:

- ***Careers Wales*** – offer advice about specialist college placement for pupils 16+ with severe learning difficulties. They also provide information about possible supported work experiences or give information about post school opportunities.

- ***Adult community Service Managers*** –Provide information about Social Services provision for young adults.

Social workers with responsibility for pupils aged 18+ - Gather information about individual pupils needs and liaise with the relevant service. They will also provide information about benefit entitlement as benefits change

PERSONAL SOCIAL & HEALTH EDUCATION

This area of the curriculum now comes under the new 'Health and Wellbeing' area of learning & experience (AOLE) which covers 5 themes:

- Health and Emotional wellbeing
- Moral & Spiritual development
- Active citizenship
- Sustainable development
- Global citizenship

Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE)

Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) is a statutory requirement of the Curriculum for Wales and is mandatory for all learners from ages 3 to 16. RVE forms part of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experiences (AoLE).

Learners at Maes Y Coed are supported to overcome barriers to learning and we will explore their potential in RVE. We will provide experiences relevant to RVE for all our pupils.

Considerations may include:

- active, multi-sensory approaches to introduce new learning in RVE, taking account of the varied needs and interests of every learner.
- inclusive opportunities for learners to experience awe and wonder in a variety of environments.
- using a variety of stimuli, such as religious and non-religious artifacts and relevant contexts.

We help to develop our pupils experiences of life, celebrating, exploring, caring, sharing, feeling, loving and encouraging the development of pupils individual personalities.

We provide dedicated time for the YMC family to come together to worship and celebrate together. Collective worship is predominantly Christian focussed and is appropriate to family backgrounds, ages and abilities of our pupils.

Parents may request to withdraw their child from some or all aspects of R.E. The Head-teacher will discuss this with parents.

COMMUNICATION

We all need to feel connected, and yet we all connect differently. At Maes Y Coed Communication is always a priority for us! We use a total communication approach that supports people to connect in the right way for each individual.

Children and Adults with communication difficulties often struggle to understand and use spoken language, and need support to communicate basic needs, wants and desires. Total communication makes use of the skills a child or adult has.

By using this approach we empower people to communicate and express themselves – be it through speech or sign, touch or movement, gesture or sound.

The total communication approach is about finding and using the right combination of communication methods for each person. This approach helps an individual to form connections, ensures successful interactions and supports information exchanges and conversations.

Total communication is also about creating a positive environment that will help a person communicate and interact.

For example, this may mean:

- Changing the lighting in the room.
- Reducing the amount of background noise.
- Moving position so that you can see or hear better.
- Reducing clutter or removing things that are distracting.

Methods of communication

Here are some examples of different formal and non-formal types of communication that are used at our school:

- **Non-verbal**: including body movements, breathing patterns and eye pointing. Textures, smells, temperature, intensive interaction and routine can also support communication by allowing an individual to anticipate what is going to happen next.
- **Language-based communication**: including speech, and the sign system; Signalong.
- **Symbol systems**: including using objects of reference (real objects and object symbols),Widgit,Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS), line drawings, pictures and photographs.

These methods of communication can be used in any combination and will be individual to the person.

Every learner at school has a Communication Passport which is used to enable them to communicate with familiar and less familiar people.

School and ECO-Council

Our School council has a pupil representative from every class throughout the school. The members are elected by their class peers. Our Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council are voted for by the whole school community.
Council meetings are held regularly and include items raised by classes or individuals.
Our school council are actively involved in staff appointments and other whole school developments eg revamp of the Sensory room; theme days for the Menus. Their input is highly valued by the whole school community.

Our Eco Council is again made up of representatives from across the school including mainly learners but also our caretaker, our bursar and Deputy Head. Our Eco Council really are the driving force in ensuring we are as Eco friendly and as sustainable as possible.

ELSA

Maes Y Coed is part of the ELSA project.
What is ELSA?
An Educational Psychology led intervention programme to promote the emotional well-being of children and young people. Teaching assistants receive ongoing training and supervision from Educational Psychologists for accreditation as Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA).
ELSA is a proactive and planned intervention for individuals or groups of children experiencing difficulties in terms of emotional literacy. The work undertaken may include the development of listening and communication skills, managing anger, promote friendships and social skills, build self-esteem.

For further information please contact Bethan Downing, Emma Payne or Louissa Golding.

Forest School

Our Forest school is a huge hit with the learners! It offers them opportunities to achieve, develop confidence and build self esteem through hands on learning in the outdoors in t natural environment.
Forest School encourages children to explore the natural environment and learn in it.

Forest school is led by our accredited Forest School Leader Paula Williams.

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