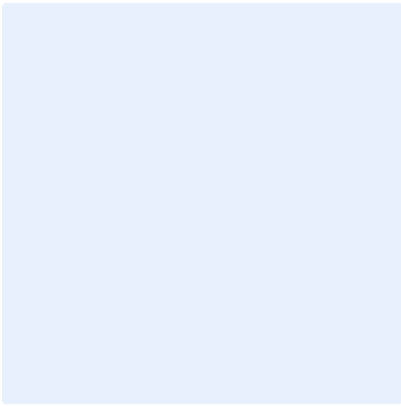


# **GWYNEDD SCHOOLS LANGUAGE POLICY 2021**

**School**



**Date Adopted:**

**Review Date:**

**Signed on behalf of the Chair of Governors:**

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**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Background

Specific expectations are set by Gwynedd Council's Education Department to contribute to national strategies and legislation in terms of promoting and increasing the use of the Welsh language.

It is a requirement, under section 84 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act (2013), and to comply with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019, for all Local Education Authorities to prepare and submit a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, outlining the vision of Welsh medium education within the authority over the next ten years.

A statutory requirement is also placed on the Council under Section 44 of the Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011 to draft and publish county strategies outlining how they will contribute to the national aim set by the Welsh Government's Welsh Language Strategy, Cymraeg 2050, to increase the number of speakers throughout Wales and to increase the opportunities for people to use the Welsh language everyday. The Gwynedd county language strategy - Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023 - sets the commitment and vision for the county, and the work of the Education Department and the WESP contribute to the aims of this county strategy.

Promoting the use of the Welsh language is also one of Gwynedd Council's improvement aims, with the Council's Strategic Plan stating that the aim is to see: "The people of Gwynedd taking advantage of opportunities to use the Welsh language in the community, the workplace and in accessing public services".

Therefore, this policy has been drafted in order to give a summary of the expectations placed on Headteachers and their schools in relation to promoting the use of the Welsh language, and to confirm the procedures that already exist in this context.

The policy is split into four sections, outlining best practice under the following headings:

- **Education Medium**
- **Social Use**
- **Recruitment and Appointment of Staff**
- **Administration and Communication**

Every Headteacher, in consultation with their staff and the Governing Body, are expected to approve and adopt this Language Policy.

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure the success of the Language Policy in his/her school, and the headteacher is expected to provide clear guidance in order to establish a thorough understanding of the policy's aim and to ensure that the efforts of classroom teachers are reinforced by ensuring an appropriate Welsh ethos in the school.

## **THE POLICY'S GENERAL OBJECTIVES**

The main aim of the Policy is to ensure that Headteachers, school staff and Governors are aware of the expectations to use and promote Welsh in all parts of the operation of schools in the county, and ensure that the rights of the pupils and the school's extended family to use Welsh when dealing with the school is always respected.

In implementing this policy, the school and governing body will ensure:

- that all pupils in the county possess appropriate linguistic skills in Welsh and English, and that this expectation is consistent across each school.
- that there is an appropriate provision to enable every pupil to develop bilingual proficiency. In this context, schools are expected to continue to foster the skills of those pupils who are Welsh first language, and introduce Welsh to those who are Welsh-learners.
- that all of the County's education establishments are expected to reinforce the Language Policy in their administration, social life and pastoral arrangements, as well as in the curricular provision.

Although the general aim of the policy in terms of the education medium is to develop bilingualism, the balance is weighted in favour of the Welsh language. This is especially true in the early years [nursery and in the years leading up to the end of the Foundation Phase] in order to set firm foundations for further development. For the other Key Stages, it is expected that a purposeful strategy is implemented to enable pupils from Welsh speaking and non-Welsh speaking households to develop their grasp of both Welsh and English. In this context, the emphasis placed on both languages at different times in the pupil's development will differentiate according to the pupil's linguistic background and the area served.

### **1. EDUCATION MEDIUM**

#### **GENERAL PRINCIPLE**

**All the county's schools should operate in a way that contributes to the aims and objectives of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, to increase and improve planning for Welsh medium education provision.**

#### **1.1 PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

The expectation is the same for every primary school.

##### **Early Years:**

Primary schools are expected to set a strong foundation for the Welsh language ensuring that pupils are given the opportunity to learn Welsh as soon as possible.

##### **Foundation Phase:**

The foundation established at the nursery and reception stages should be built upon by continuing to develop pupils' grasp of Welsh, and begin the process of developing their English language skills. On a practical level, this means that most schools start introducing English formally as a subject during the final term at the end of the Foundation Phase. Welsh will be the school's official assessment language at the end of the Foundation Phase.

## Key Stage 2:

The pupils' grasp of Welsh should continue to be developed giving attention to the development of their skills in both languages. In this context, schools are expected to make use of English as a medium as pupils move through KS2. The emphasis placed on both languages at different times in the pupil's development will differentiate according to the pupil's linguistic background and the area served. This arrangement will be expected to secure opportunities to develop the Welsh language across the curriculum in every area across the county. Pupils' progress in Welsh and in English are assessed at the end of the key stage.

In addition, schools are expected to ensure that pupils who are Welsh learners at KS2, learn Welsh as soon as possible, either by attending the Immersion Education System, or intense provision at school, for them to be able to fully follow the curriculum through the medium of Welsh / bilingually.

### 1.2 SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The expectation is the same for every secondary school.

Every pupil who has attained a firm Level 3 at the end of KS2 is expected to pursue a Welsh Language Study Programme [First Language] in order to ensure appropriate progression and continuation. There is also a need to ensure that every pupil studies Welsh as a subject until the end of Yr11 and sits appropriate external examinations and tests at the end of KS3 and KS4.

Schools are expected to build upon the foundations set in primary by ensuring that each pupil continues to develop skills in Welsh and English by using both languages as a learning medium to varying degrees. In this context, there is a need to use the information transferred about the linguistic attainment of each pupil by the Welsh Language Cluster Coordinators for purposeful linguistic planning to promote bilingualism. On a practical level, it will be necessary to act in the following manner:

- In the case of pupils with **Welsh language proficiency** but who require to further develop their grasp of Welsh and to improve specific skills in English [Cohorts A & B], it is expected that a vast proportion of their curriculum will be through the medium of Welsh. In addition, specific experiences will be planned across the curriculum for them to develop and improve their skills in English. In such cases it is expected that the time set aside for experiences in Welsh and English will roughly correspond to 70% : 30%.
- In the case of **pupils who need to develop and reinforce their skills** in Welsh [Cohort C1] the curriculum is planned in a way that will allow them to practice and develop the Welsh language across the curriculum. In such cases it is expected that the time set aside for experiences in Welsh and English will be at least 50%.
- In the case of a **minority of the pupils with appropriate proficiency in English but who lack appropriate skills in Welsh** [Cohort C2], emphasis is placed on planning opportunities across the curriculum to develop their oral skills in Welsh. In such cases it is expected that the time set aside for experiences in Welsh will be at least 30%.

The system described above, if implemented effectively in a school, will develop and increase the active bilingualism of learners and develop pupils' bilingualism. It is also expected that this will be a means to increase the number of pupils that sit KS4 examinations through the medium of Welsh.

In addition, schools are expected to ensure that pupils who are Welsh learners in the early years of KS3, learn Welsh as soon as possible, either by attending the Immersion Education System, or intense provision at school, for them to be able to follow elements of the curriculum through the medium of Welsh / bilingually.

## PROVIDING FOR THE DIFFERENT COHORTS IN SECONDARY

The Language Policy defines the linguistic development of pupils in Welsh and English as they work towards the aim of achieving bilingualism. Secondary schools are expected to make use of the linguistic cohorts together with the language provision suggested to ensure pupils' bilingual development.

COHORT	Definition of the type of pupil according to linguistic ability.	The linguistic needs required to develop the pupil's bilingual skills.
A	Pupils with parallel age-related proficiency in Welsh and English.	Bilingual education across the curriculum to foster, reinforce and extend skills in both languages.
B	Pupils with age-related proficiency in Welsh but who need to reinforce some aspects of their English language skills.	Bilingual education with an emphasis on developing skills that are needed to enable the pupil to transfer to cohort A in due course.
C1	Pupils with appropriate proficiency in English but who need to reinforce some aspects in Welsh language skills	Emphasis is placed on extending the pupil's proficiency in the three attainment targets. Ensure that extra-curricular opportunities are used to develop the pupil's grasp of Welsh.
C2	Pupils with appropriate proficiency in English but who lack the age-related skills in Welsh.	Emphasis placed on oral and practical work through the medium of Welsh.
CH	Pupils without appropriate age-related skills in either language.	Careful and purposeful planning to develop essential skills in both languages.

The following are offered as further guidelines for consideration at individual school level.

1. Every school is expected to carefully provide the bilingualism of every pupil via intentional language planning.
2. Every school is expected to consider the methods/combination of the most suitable and appropriate bilingual teaching methods for their different situations. In order to ensure that appropriate use is made of Welsh and English as a medium, the following should be considered:
  - present some specific units/modules through the medium of Welsh and others through the medium of English (the appropriate balance has to be considered);
  - present some subjects through the medium of Welsh and others through the medium of English (the appropriate balance has to be considered);
  - introduce key vocabulary/worksheets in both languages (consideration has to be given if this is required in every subject or some subjects only);
  - translanguaging, namely read/watch aspects of a subject in one language and discuss or write in the other;
  - use both languages as media to a varying degree to reinforce both languages, particularly with Cohorts B, C1, C2, CH (the language has to be used intentionally and carefully in order not to mix both languages too much and unnecessary).
3. Every school is expected to offer a specific provision for learners (Cohorts C1 and C2), ensuring a sufficient link with the Welsh language across the curriculum.
4. Every school is expected to encourage all newcomers in Yr7 to attend an intensive course in the Immersion Education System as soon as possible. This should be reinforced with a provision at the school e.g. offering some of the practical subjects at least, at the start, through the medium of Welsh.

5. Every school is expected to establish a system to track and measure pupils' language development according to the Language Cohorts, to ensure progress in their language proficiency, so that everyone moves towards Cohort A on the language continuum.

## 2. SOCIAL USE OF WELSH

### GENERAL PRINCIPLE

**Every school is expected to gain positive attitudes amongst pupils and the workforce towards the language, creating pride and increase the use of the language within and outside the classroom.**

*The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is a statutory document by Gwynedd Education Authority, and it is expected that every school will:*

- Provide data regarding the language use and skills of pupils in schools, and data about workforce language skills.
- Work within the same framework to ensure learners who are confident to use their Welsh language skills in various contexts.
- The requirements of the Language Charter and the Secondary Language Strategy are incorporated as an integral part of the school Curriculum to achieve the requirements of the county language strategy - *Welsh Language Promotion Plan for Gwynedd 2018-2023*. To ensure that every learner develops his/her Welsh language skills for socialising, to prepare for the world of work, and to show positive attitudes towards the language. Embedding and expanding the informal use of Welsh is also an integral part of the Areas of Learning and Experience within the new curriculum.

## 3. RECRUITING AND APPOINTING

### GENERAL PRINCIPLES

**Every school is expected to act in accordance with the Recruitment and Appointment Policy (2021) and to ensure that the Welsh language receives appropriate attention when advertising and recruiting for jobs.**

**It is expected that Governing Body appointment panels will be aware of the need to consider language needs when they appoint.**

**It is expected for Welsh to be noted as an essential/key skill for every post, and the exact level of linguistic skills needed to achieve the requirements of the post - *speaking and listening, reading, comprehension and writing* - are shown clearly in the Person Specification when advertising.**

**It is expected that individuals appointed will possess the linguistic skills that are noted for the post. If an individual is appointed, who does not possess the essential skills noted for the post in question, then they will be expected to commit to a training programme in order to improve their language skills.**

## Advertising

The Language Designation for the post is expected to be included in every advertisement in accordance with what has been determined for the type of post in the appendix *Language Framework and Job Designation List*.

## Appointment

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher/Recruitment Panel to ensure that individuals appointed will reach the requirements noted for the post, or that they commit to work to attain those requirements.

If it is not possible to appoint someone with the necessary linguistic skills after advertising once, consideration can be given to re-advertising to receive applications from applicants who do not meet the language requirements immediately, but who are willing to commit to learn. Further guidance about this is available from the relevant Education Officers.

**The Language Designations of the post itself will not be changed at all when re-advertising.**

In such circumstances, it is expected that the advertisement will include the following wording:

*We are eager to consider applications from individuals who, possibly, do not currently reach the language level of the post, but the successful applicant would be required to commit to either learn, or develop language skills to the required level within a reasonable timescale. The Council will provide support to achieve this.*

In such circumstances, and as part of the appointment process if someone is appointed who does not meet the language requirements, it is expected that an appropriate support and training plan will be agreed and drawn up for the individual in agreement between the relevant Education Officers, the Head of Department and the post-holder, in order to close the gap between the individual's skills and the required skills for the post.

## Training / Following appointment

It is the responsibility of the appointing Headteacher/Manager to ensure that they seek advice from the relevant Education Officers about available training as appropriate, and that the individual attends any identified training for them in order to develop their skills. Heads of Department/Managers are expected to monitor the individual's progress as part of performance management and continuous evaluation procedures.

## 4. ADMINISTRATION

### GENERAL PRINCIPLE

**All educational establishments in the county are expected to communicate with pupils, parents and the school's extended family bilingually, respecting the choice of language and the right of individuals to use Welsh when dealing with the school.**

**Although it is generally expected that information will be provided bilingually, it is also recognised that Welsh is the operational, natural language of schools and schools are encouraged to consider circumstances where it is appropriate to communicate only in Welsh.**

## **Face-to-face and telephone contact**

It is expected that it will be possible for the public to receive a full bilingual service at the receptions of each of the county's educational establishments.

A service through the medium of Welsh or bilingual should be offered when contacting via the telephone (with Welsh first), in a welcoming way, and any calls from the public should be answered in the same manner.

If the caller speaks Welsh, but the member of the administrative staff who answers the call is unable to speak Welsh fluently enough to deal with the matter in full, the member of the administrative staff should explain this after greeting the caller, and offer to transfer the call to another member of staff who will be able to deal with the matter in full in the caller's chosen language.

In cases where the officer who answers the call is a Welsh-learner, the officer is encouraged to use his/her Welsh to the best of his/her ability.

It is expected that messages on the school's answer-phone will be bilingual, with the Welsh message heard first.

## **Contact and written information**

In all the county's educational establishments, any correspondence or written material - e.g. letter, circular, email message, text message, posters, pamphlets - intended for parents/guardians or the public in general, should be written in Welsh and English. This includes printed written material and material that is shared electronically with a parent/guardian.

It should be ensured that any messages sent electronically and by using apps treat Welsh and English equally.

It is expected that all official documents shared with the public in the school's name, whether produced internally or by an external body or organisation, will afford the same status to both Welsh and English.

It is expected that any social media accounts (such as Facebook and Twitter) will follow the same principles and present information bilingually, with Welsh appearing first every time.

At the same time, it is recognised that Welsh is the operational language of the school and it is expected that the school will give consideration to circumstances where using Welsh only or both languages would be more appropriate.

## **Meetings**

In all the county's education establishments, it is expected that any meeting arranged will be held through the medium of Welsh, including internal meetings, meetings with members of staff, and meetings of the Governing Body.

If arranging a meeting with a pupil/parent/guardian to discuss matters regarding education or any other personal matters, it should be ensured that the meeting is conducted in the individual's chosen language. It is the responsibility of the school/headteacher to ensure that individuals have a right to discuss personal matters in their chosen language and that this is respected.

It is expected that the Welsh language will be the main language of public meetings held by any of the county's educational establishments.

Anyone is permitted to speak Welsh or English, as they choose, in a public meeting arranged by any education establishment in the county, and the school is responsible to arrange a simultaneous translation service to



ensure that those who do not speak Welsh are able to understand and contribute effectively to the meeting. Chairpersons of such meetings will be expected to address and hold the meeting in Welsh and encourage non-Welsh speakers to use the translation equipment to promote language choice.

Leaders in events or more informal meetings such as concerts, open evenings etc., are encouraged to greet the audience bilingually in order to include everyone.

**Translation provision:**

The Council's Translation Service can provide support in meetings and with documentation for Governors, to ensure that non-Welsh speakers can continue to play a full part in a meeting or event.

Consideration should be given to circumstances where translation provision is required to address the individual's language choice.

**MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY**

The Policy's Implementation will be monitored as part of the general arrangements to monitor services.

With the support of Schools, the Authority will report annually to the Welsh Government on the implementation of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.

A specific section will be included in the Annual Report of each school on the implementation of the Language Policy in schools.

The Governing Body is expected to review and approve the Language Policy in accordance with the annual system to review policies.