DŴR Y FELIN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL
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Dear Parents and Carers,

As we begin another exciting academic year at Dŵr y Felin, I would like to take the opportunity to welcome all pupils and families back to school and share some reflections on the year that has just passed, along with our priorities for the months ahead.

The recent examination results provide much cause for celebration. We are delighted that outcomes have improved this year, and in several areas that improvement has been particularly significant. The number of pupils achieving the highest grades has also increased, firmly placing Dŵr y Felin once again amongst the highest-performing schools in the county.

While we are incredibly proud of these achievements, what makes this success especially meaningful are the individual stories behind the results. We have witnessed some truly heartwarming successes from pupils who have overcome significant adversity and challenges, as well as many who, through determination, resilience and sheer hard work, have achieved qualifications that will open doors to exciting futures. Their achievements embody the values we seek to nurture in all our young people and serve as an inspiration to us all.

At Dŵr y Felin, we continue to uphold our motto: *"Nid da lle gellir gwell – It's not good enough unless it's your best."* This ethos remains at the heart of everything we do and is increasingly reflected in the attitudes and aspirations of our pupils. We are seeing a growing number of young people who are no longer satisfied with simply achieving an average outcome. Instead, they are striving to improve, setting themselves higher standards and taking greater pride in their learning. This shift in mindset is something we are immensely proud of and are committed to nurturing further.

This year, and moving forward, we are placing a strong emphasis on:

Character and Values
We are nurturing pupils to be:

- Respectful, kind and empathetic
- Resilient, ambitious and responsible
- Motivated, curious and independent

These qualities are essential not only for academic success but also for personal growth, wellbeing and future readiness. Dŵr y Felin's proud history of achievement and strong community spirit provides a solid foundation as we continue to develop confident, capable and compassionate young people.

Headteacher: Miss C Richmond
Deputy Headteachers: Mr A Loynton and Mrs L J Thomas
Assistant Headteacher: Mrs J Battle, Mr S Crowson and Mrs C Lawson
Associate Assistant Headteacher: Mr J Horgan
School Business Manager: Mrs L E Thomas

Focus and Learning

One of the most positive developments over the past year has been the introduction of our mobile-free learning environment. We have seen encouraging evidence that this approach is having a positive impact on pupils' concentration, engagement and readiness to learn. Classrooms are calmer, learning conversations are richer, and pupils are increasingly recognising the benefits of being fully present in lessons.

By reducing distractions, we are helping pupils develop the focus, self-discipline and study habits that will serve them well both in school and beyond. We remain committed to protecting and strengthening this environment so that every pupil can thrive.

Reading for Success

Reading remains one of the most powerful ways to support learning and personal development. Pupils who read regularly:

- Perform better academically
- Develop empathy and emotional intelligence
- Build vocabulary, knowledge and confidence
- Are more likely to enjoy success in their future careers

We will continue to promote a strong reading culture throughout the school and encourage all pupils to make reading a regular part of their daily routine. Parents and carers can hep here by asking them about their reading and discussing their ideas and opinions.

Community and Friendship

We continue to remind pupils that meaningful friendships are built through shared experiences, conversations and genuine connections rather than through social media alone. As a school community, we want to foster kindness, curiosity, respect and a genuine sense of belonging for all. We encourage all pupils to get involved in one of our extra-curricular activities and if there is something that they would like to do that we are not already – why not start something.

Looking Ahead

As we begin this new school year, there is much to look forward to. Our challenge now is to build on those successes, continue raising standards and ensure that every pupil is supported to achieve their very best.

I would like to thank all parents and carers for your continued trust, encouragement and partnership. The strong relationship between school and home is a key ingredient in our pupils' success, and I am grateful for the support you provide.

Together, we will continue to nurture a culture where effort is valued, excellence is expected, and every pupil is encouraged to explore their potential.

Edrychaf ymlaen at flwyddyn arall o gydweithio gyda phawb yng nghymuned yr ysgol. I look forward to another year of working with everyone in the school community.

Yours faithfully,

C. Richmond
Headteacher
Dŵr y Felin Comprehensive School

School information

It has been wonderful to see pupils settle back into school life and routines following the summer break. The new year 7 intake are quite a large force at 250 but they are finding their feet well; on many occasions helped and supported by our older pupils who are frequently seen escorting them when they have lost their way and helping them find their way around. Croeso i Dŵr y Felin.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Punctuality and attendance for most pupils have been very good for the beginning of term. Late marks will be awarded and frequency of lateness monitored by our Year Teams and the Education Welfare Service. Learning activities are set from **8.30am** and pupils are expected to be in their form classes ready. This also provides time for form tutors to check-in with pupils and support a positive start to the day. Pupils who are late are often more dis-regulated and fine it harder to settle. This often leads to increased anxiousness and worrying. You can help by ensuring that you child is here in time for an 8.30am start every day.

Our Education Welfare Officer works closely with Year Teams to monitor attendance on behalf of the Local Authority. If your child has worries about attending school, please do not hesitate to speak to their Form Tutor or Head of year.

If your child is unwell and unable to attend school, please **phone** or **email** on AbsenceD5@hwbcymru.net to notify the school office by 8.30am. At Dŵr y Felin we follow the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures which includes the monitoring and tracking of attendance. As part of our early intervention and safeguarding strategies, a first day call of absence will be made if notification has not been received.

Requesting leave of absence or holidays in term time for key stage three pupils must be made at least one month in advance using the school proforma available on the website or through your Form Tutor/Head of Year. Each request will be considered by the Headteacher and notification of authorisation communicated thereafter. Pupils will be required to maintain a running average of above 95%. There will be no authorisation granted for holiday leave during GCSE years or for pupils with poor attendance.

The school appreciates that there may be times when pupils must attend medical appointments during the school day. In these instances, a copy of the appointment letter should be provided to the school prior to the appointment date.

Pick-ups and drop-off – Please use the Cwrt Herbert entrance for vehicle drop offs. Parents should **not** drive into the Dŵr y Felin Road entrance to the school. **Entry this side of the school is for pupils and is strictly pedestrian.**

May I also remind parents that Llys Y Coed opposite the Cwrt Herbert entry is a private road with double yellow lines indicating prohibited parking. Families are asked to please ensure this road is NOT used for pick-up or drop-off or indeed any waiting. There are many elderly residents in this road who have shared distress over incidents. Please help support and protect our community with kindness and respectful consideration to residents.

Uniform

As we begin a new term, I'd like to take a moment to emphasise the importance of maintaining high standards in school uniform at Dŵr y Felin. Uniform is more than just clothing—it is a symbol of our shared identity, pride, and commitment to excellence. When pupils wear their uniform smartly and consistently, it fosters a strong sense of belonging and reinforces the team ethos that is central to our school community. You wouldn't see an Osprey wearing Cardiff shorts onto the pitch would you?

Uniform helps create a level playing field, promoting equality and reducing distractions. It also reflects the values of respect, discipline, and unity that we strive to instil in all our pupils. We are proud of our school, and wearing the uniform correctly is one way we show that pride every day.

We kindly ask for your continued support in ensuring that your child adheres to our uniform policy**.** We would like to gently remind families again that **skirts should be of an appropriate length—**knee-length or just above the knee—as outlined in our guidelines. **This helps maintain a respectful and professional appearance and ensures consistency across the school.**

We understand that fashion and personal expression are important to young people, and we encourage individuality in many aspects of school life. However, when it comes to uniform, we ask that all pupils follow the agreed standards so that we can uphold the values and expectations that make our school community strong.

The full uniform policy can be found on our website.

Getting help with school costs – Schools Essential Grant

It is important to note that you must apply for free school meals for children in secondary school. We do not have a universal free meals system like you di in primary school. Families with children in reception to year 11 on lower incomes may also be eligible for help with further school costs. For pupils starting secondary school this is £200 where parents and carers may claim once per child per school year. The grant may be used for:

- School uniforms, coats and shoes
- Equipment for school activities, including musical lessons, outdoor learning and school clubs, sports equipment and kit
- Classroom essentials, including pens, pencils and school bags
- Equipment and materials for new subjects or courses

For further information, please see the Local Authority website: Get help with school essentials - Neath Port Talbot Council (npt.gov.uk)

We have pre-loved uniform available - many items have never been worn. If you would like to provide a loving home for this uniform, please speak with your child's form tutor or Head of Year.

Wellbeing and Pastoral Support

At Dŵr y Felin, we pride ourselves on the wellbeing support we provide to our whole community - this has been recognised by Estyn as a strength of our school. We believe that partnership and early

intervention is crucial to develop routines and practices that support good attendance, wellbeing and emotional health. Through our curriculum, pupils will develop their knowledge and understanding during health and wellbeing learning experiences. These will also include the development of skills within the Relationships and Sexual Education Framework. Further information can be found in the school's curriculum areas on the website.

This year we have expanded our Pastoral Engagement Officers who will now work with each year group and external wellbeing and family support is accessed through the Local Authority and the Health Board. Examples of support available include the in-school counselling service, which may be accessed independently or with support; dedicated Pastoral Support Officers who use emotional literacy programmes to provide targeted support; and the full CAMHS in-reach programme. Our inclusive pathway provision means that all pupils who need it have a bespoke pathway of support and education pathways developed with their specific needs in mind. If you have worries about our child and/or family, please speak to your Head of Year.

Please may we remind families that your first point of contact is the Head of Year or Pastoral Engagement Officer for your child. Please allow reasonable time for them to return your call and be mindful that the Heads of Year also teach a timetable and may have scheduled meetings after school.

Mobile free learning environments – a reminder of procedures:

Policy/Procedure

1. Any mobile phone, including ear buds, which are being used or visible anywhere on the school site during the school day will be confiscated by the member of staff who has seen the device and stored securely in reception.
2. On every occasion, the phone will be returned to the pupil at the end of the school day
3. Parents are requested to contact reception if they need to pass a message to their child. All pupils in years 7 to 11 are provided with a school planner which enables them to record homework and a timetable so that they will not need to access their phone during the day.

Information and communication

The school's primary method of communication is through ClassCharts. We will also update the school website and social media platforms with school news. If you are experiencing difficulties, please contact the school office for further assistance.

If you have any questions or concerns I would respectfully ask that these be made through the appropriate school channels, in the first instance this would be through your child's form tutor and Head of Year via phone, in-person or email. In instances where the school is made aware of inappropriate, derogatory and inflammatory comments which negatively affect the reputation of the school or our community, further action may be taken. We have clear communication channels through which open and honest feedback may be made.

Voluntary Contributions

At Dŵr y Felin, we are always looking for ways to enhance our school environment and the experiences we provide for our pupils. Whilst school budgets continue to face significant pressures, the generosity of our school community has enabled us to make improvements that directly benefit our learners.

Last year, voluntary contributions from parents and our wider community helped us purchase **three new picnic benches**, each costing £550, providing pupils with additional outdoor seating and social spaces that are enjoyed every day.
As we continue to develop our learning environment and pupil-centred activities, we are once again inviting members of our school community to consider making a voluntary contribution. All donations received will be used to support projects and resources that directly benefit our pupils.

If you would like to make a voluntary contribution, please visit **ParentPay**, where you can select an amount that you wish to donate.

Raise money for Dŵr y Felin through Easyfundraising
Did you know that you can raise money for Dŵr y Felin every time you shop online, at **no extra cost to you**?

We are delighted to be registered with **Easyfundraising**, which means that thousands of retailers will donate a percentage of what you spend to the school whenever you shop through the Easyfundraising website or app.

Whether you're buying groceries, clothes, gifts, insurance, holidays or everyday essentials, your purchases could help raise valuable funds for the school without costing you a penny more.
Sign up for free today:

🔗 https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/dwr-y-felin-comprehensive-school

Please consider registering and encouraging family members and friends to do the same. The more supporters we have, the greater the benefit to our pupils and school community. Every donation, however small, helps us provide additional opportunities and resources for our learners.

Dragon Bags Recycling
Please helps us create extra funds through donating any old clothes that you wish to get rid of. Dragon Bags is a Wales based textile recycling programme that collects wearable clothes, paired shoes and selected textiles from schools, helping us raise funds while diverting waste from landfill. They can be placed in any bin bag and dropped of fin B Block reception at any time. We will also do drives at times throughout the year so look out for dates on our socials.

We are paid for every kilogram we recycle so please bear us in mind when making more cupboard space.

As a school community we look forward to another year watching our young people grow and flourish, making memories and becoming the young adults they have the potential to be. We look forward to sharing these memories with you and welcoming you to our in-school events.

Kindest regards,
C. Richmond

Headteacher / Pennaeth

Key dates

Training days when pupils do not have to be onsite

Date	Reason
Wednesday October 21th 2026	Staff training INSET day
Friday May 28th 2027	Staff training INSET day
Monday July 19th 2027	Staff training INSET day
Tuesday July 20th 2027	Staff training INSET day

Parent Pupil Progress Evenings

Year group	Date
Year 7 parents Wellbeing check in	Thursday October 3rd – timings TBC
Year 7 Progress evening	Thursday April 29th - 3.20-6.20pm
Year 8 Progress evening	Thursday January 7th 3.20-6.20pm
Year 9 Progress evening	Thursday January 28th 3.20-6.20pm
Year 10 Progress evening	Thursday March 11th 3.20-6.20pm
Year 11 Progress evening	Thursday October 22nd 3.20-6.20pm

Open Evenings and Parent information events

Event	Date
Presentation Evening	Thursday 17th September 6 – 7.30pm
Year 6 Parent Open Evening	September 24th 4-6pm
Christmas Carol Concert	Wednesday December 9th 6-7.30pm in St Davids
Senior Citizens Christmas Party	Wednesday December 16th 4pm TBC
Year 9 Option Information evening	Thursday January 11th

Summer Concert	Thursday July 8th 5.30pm – 7pm TBC
Year 6 Parent Information evening	Thursday July 8th 4.30pm and again at 5.30pm
GCSE RESULTS day	Thursday August 19th 2027

Holidays

Holiday	Date
October half term	Break up on Friday 23rd October and all return on Monday2nd November
Christmas	Break up on Friday Dec 18th. All return on Mon January 4th (NB: No Dec INSET day)
February half term	Break up on Friday 5th February – All return on Monday 15th February
Easter	Break up on Friday 19th March. All return on Monday 5th April
May half term	INSET day on Friday May 28th All return on Monday May 31st 2027
July break up	School finishes on Friday July 16th 2026