



SCHOOL SESSION, SUBJECT ALLOCATION AND TEACHING TIMES POLICY

Chair of Governors:

Date: March 2026

Date of Review: March 2029

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In accordance with the ethos of Ysgol Bryn Derw, all children will receive their entitlement to the whole range of Areas of Learning and Experience within the Curriculum for Wales, as designated by the relevant Orders.

TEACHING TIMES AND THE LENGTH OF THE SCHOOL DAY

The school day at Ysgol Bryn Derw runs as follows:

9:00am – Start of school day

12:00-1:00pm – Lunchtime (carousel of lunches for younger/older pupils)

1:00-3.15pm – End of school day

In line with national recommendations each pupil will receive their entitlement to teaching times as appropriate to their year group

Years Reception – 2	21 hrs
Years 3 – 6	23½ hrs
Years 7 – 11	25 hrs

As Ysgol Bryn Derw caters for all year groups and the vast majority pupils are brought into school on transport arranged with the Local Authority then we have to have a common start and finish to the school day. Consequently, for the older pupils to receive their entitlement, the younger children will be in school for longer than their year group requires. In order to adjust demands according to their age, younger pupils will have increased amounts of non-teaching time through the day and over the week. This will usually mean that they have more free time, rest time or playtime.

The definition of 'teaching time' at Ysgol Bryn Derw is based on those periods where the pupils are under the direction of a teacher and following a planned programme related to the Curriculum for Wales or the individual's Individual Education Programme.

Registration and the daily act of worship, will not be included in teaching times

Lunchtime and playtime may be deemed teaching time for pupils in classes that have a particular focus or where IEPs have a focus upon living skills and social skills.

For time to qualify as 'teaching time' planning will be in place and implemented by a member of staff. Consequently

- a) School assembly will qualify as teaching time except for 5 minutes which constitutes the required 'Act of Worship'. The remainder will generally focus on an aspect of PSE or RVE relevant to the development of the pupils' understanding of significant issues (see medium term planning for assemblies).
- b) 'Free / choice time' will qualify as teaching time if the pupils are directed to follow a programme which is planned according to individual or class needs e.g. TEACCH or communication development opportunities. This may be termed 'structured' or 'directed play' on the class timetable.

- c) For many pupils, lunchtime will qualify as teaching time if a programme e.g. mealtime passport, toileting scheme, social skill focus is being followed. This will generally mean an IEP or PHSE programme involving eating skills, healthy eating awareness or social behaviour.
- d) Similarly, 'transition times' will also be termed teaching times since they will involve important skills of finishing work properly, moving from one part of the school to another in a safe and orderly manner and increasing independence using supports and teaching targets appropriate to learner development e.g. objects of reference, photo/symbol schedules, now and next boards, written schedules.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

MEDICAL AND THERAPEUTIC NEEDS

Given that all pupils have ASD and learning difficulties it will be necessary to adapt the curriculum in order to take into account the specific needs of individuals. As promoted in the access statements of the Curriculum for Wales orders, many will be taught at a lower year group, in line with their level of development, than their age would indicate while others will have significant amounts of the school day devoted to addressing their medical or therapeutic needs.

DISTRESSED BEHAVIOUR

Similarly, pupils who can present with distressed behaviour may not be able to access the direct teaching for periods of time. Pupils exhibiting distressed behaviours are entitled to the same amount of teaching time as their peers and should be offered this by adaptations to the nature of teaching approaches and lengths of time best suited to them as individuals. It will be inevitable that there will be times when individual pupils will not be able or willing to take advantage of what is offered, in spite of the best efforts of the staff involved. Teachers are expected to take account of the impact of distressed behaviour on the remainder of the class and make arrangements for disruption to be minimised. Such period should be kept to a minimum however and the pupils should return to his/her normal educational programme as soon as possible.

Episodes of distressed behaviour can also be experiences to promote learning and if it is managed effectively can have a long-term benefit to the pupil. It can therefore be seen as a teaching opportunity in itself if staff responses are planned in ways that help the pupil to learn and improve their social behaviour.

See also the Curriculum for Wales Policy and Teaching and Learning policy.

RANGE OF AoLEs AVAILABLE

While allowing for these adaptations, all classes and key stages will offer the full range of subjects for the relevant year group and the balance of time allocated to the subjects will approximate the general guidance available.

HOW THE CURRICULUM IS DELIVERED:

CROSS-CURRICULAR WORK

The school's approach to organising teaching and learning is holistic and person centred, as such, while much of the subject content will be delivered through dedicated lessons, substantial amounts of each subject will be delivered through topic or cross-curricular work.

Teachers are expected to make an assessment of the relative proportions of time spent delivering areas/subjects in response to the needs of individual pupils and their class profile of needs.

VARIATIONS OVER THE KEY STAGE

As pupils spend time in each year group over their school career, teachers are expected to consider delivery of the requirements of the curriculum and must plan an appropriate balance of time allocated to areas/subjects.

It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure that each AoLE is covered appropriately over the course of each term. This may involve variations between weeks or between half-terms, at the teacher's discretion. This will be evidenced in Medium Term Planning.

KEY SKILLS

The acquisition of literacy, numeracy and other key skills are highly valued at Ysgol Bryn Derw and consequently timetables, and medium term plans, will reflect the importance that is placed on these areas. These skills will be embedded in the curriculum, in varying degrees, and will form the basis of recording pupil progress through their school life.

Recognising that some areas/subjects relate directly to particular key skills (English, Mathematics and ICT), these skills will be delivered continuously across all other lessons where they will have a more practical functional focus. Dedicated time for these areas will focus on those areas of knowledge and skill which cannot easily be delivered through other areas.

MEDICAL AND THERAPEUTIC REQUIREMENTS

Many individuals will have non-educational requirements that have to be addressed during the school day. At a fundamental level these will take precedence over their educational needs but class staff will work in partnership with medical professionals to identify ways in which the pupils' time can be used most effectively.

Many therapy sessions offer opportunities for the development of subject or Key Skills, e.g. incorporating English/Communication into Speech and Language sessions, Working with Others into PE and Maths into Rebound Therapy sessions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUBJECT ALLOCATIONS

There is no statutory prescribed expectations of allocated of time to each subject. It is up to each school to determine the amount of time needed for its pupils to cover the programmes of study successfully in all areas/subjects and meet the needs of the pupil population.

At Ysgol Bryn Derw it is judged that literacy and numeracy are best taught on a daily basis and PE/active physical activity regularly for 2hrs each week. However, AoLEs do not necessarily have to be taught every week, every half term or even every term, key stage departments might for example give more time to History and less to Geography in one year and then reverse the pattern in the following year'.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed within a 3-year period, or in the event of changes to Curriculum for Wales arrangements.