

Becoming Bilingual in Merthyr Tydfil County Borough



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
MERTHYR TUDFUL
MERTHYR TYDFIL
County Borough Council



Thinking about sending your child to a
Welsh Medium meithrin/school?

So, what does being bilingual mean?

It's the ability to live your life using two languages fluently; if you can speak two or more languages you may have greater opportunities throughout your life.

As a parent choosing Welsh Education for your child, you are giving them a gift for life and one that will enrich their life.

The aim of this booklet is to answer questions, address concerns and share the benefits of being bilingual.

This booklet also maps a clear Welsh medium journey for your child through the school years from meithrin, nursery, to primary, secondary schools, further education and beyond.



**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

About 81% of pupils in Welsh Primary schools in Merthyr Tydfil come from non-Welsh speaking homes

So, what are the benefits of being bilingual?

You can live your life in two (or more) languages.

Living in Wales your life is enriched when you can speak Welsh. If you want to travel or already speak other languages at home, learning another language is easier!

There are fantastic work and career opportunities.

Speaking two languages can offer more employment opportunities, plus an additional skill on your C.V. enabling you to talk with people in their choice of language.

The following career areas in particular are keen to employ Welsh speakers – media, information technology, health, the public sector, sports and leisure, retail, education and the childcare sector. Welsh speakers have a distinct advantage when looking for work (Welsh speakers are often paid 11 % more! *Careers Wales*)

Being part of our Culture and Heritage.

The ability to speak Welsh gives us a strong sense of identity and a feeling of belonging.

Bilingualism and multilingualism is the norm world-wide, and around 70 % of the population speak more than one language in their everyday lives.



**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

**International research shows that bilingual children
tend to achieve higher standards within the curriculum
and perform better in exams.**

They also tend to work better under pressure.

International Research by Prof. Colin Baker, Dr. Ellen Bailystak,
Prof. E Bylund, Prof P. Athanasopoulos and Dr. G. Poarch

Getting it right from the start

During pregnancy, research tells us that babies can hear voices and music.

So if you are keen to raise your child bilingually, now is the time to start speaking and singing in Welsh to your baby.

Welsh Government provides information about Welsh language for parents on <https://gov.wales/cymraeg-for-kids>

Speaking some words to your baby from birth is important, even if you only know a small amount of Welsh words, since it gives your baby the best start to a bilingual life.

Singing is a good way to communicate with your baby, you could sing Welsh rhymes or listen to Welsh songs.

From six months onwards your baby's language skills will develop rapidly. This is the time to begin reading simple stories with your baby and turning pages of picture books together. Your baby will begin to mimic sounds and link words with objects, so learning simple Welsh words together each day will be effective.

“I tried to talk to my bump every day in Welsh, I even learnt a few Welsh rhymes.”

Elena parent of Lowri



Play and Learn in Welsh from birth (0-4) year olds

Day Nurseries & Childminders

Usually open between 8am-6pm Monday to Friday. Ask at your local day nurseries and childminders how they provide for Welsh language development in everyday activities.

Cymraeg i Blant

Cymraeg i blant shares information, advice and support with new parents on the advantages of raising children bilingually. All parents are welcome to join our free local support groups: baby massage, baby yoga, or Welsh rhyme & sign. Please note that you don't have to speak Welsh to attend, we share simple Welsh rhymes and phrases for you to start using at home with your baby.

Early Language Development

Group sessions delivered bilingually in community venues to promote your child's early language through songs, rhymes stories and fun activities. (Suitable for parents and babies from birth onwards)

Ti a Fi Parent and toddler group sessions supported by Mudiad Meithrin

Around 1-2 hours. An opportunity for parents with children up to school age to socialise, sing and play in the medium of Welsh.

Cylchoedd Meithrin 2-4 year olds

Children can access around 2-2 ½ hours per session. Some groups provide rising 3 places, registered education, Flying Start places and after school provision. On occasions, a wraparound service is available where children can access a breakfast club or after school club at the meithrin, before or after the meithrin session and then they can be transported to the local Welsh medium school for their education input.



Cylchoedd Meithrin in Merthyr Tydfil

Cylch Meithrin Aberfan

Trinity Child and Family Centre
Aberfan
CF48 4NT
Phone: 01443 693777
E-mail: info@trinitychildcare.wales

Cylch Meithrin Pentrebach

Canolfan Integredig Cwm Golau
Heol Dyffryn, Pentrebach
CF48 4BJ
Phone: 01685 727374/07984186329
E-mail: meithrinpentrebach@hotmail.com

Cylch Meithrin Gurnos

Cedar Way, Gurnos, Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 9PA
Phone: 07507690863
E-mail: cylchmeithrinygurnos@outlook.com

Cylch Meithrin Treharris

Boys and Girls Club
Forest Road, Treharris
CF46 5RG
Phone: 07716822686
E-mail: Cylchmeithrin_treharris@outlook.com

Cylch Meithrin Twyncarmel

Capel Twyncarmel,
Clwydyfagwr, Ffordd Abertawe,
Merthyr Tudful,
CF48 1HN
Phone: 01685 350167
E-mail: cylchmeithrintwyncarmel@live.co.uk

For further information on Cylchoedd Meithrin and or Ti a Fi groups in the area:

<https://www.meithrin.cymru/find-a-cylch/>

<https://www.merthyrfis.org/>

Welsh Entertainment for Children

#Welsh@home

Cyw on S4C

- see the timetable on the Cyw website <https://cyw.cymru/>
6am - 12pm Monday to Friday
6am - 8am Saturday
6am - 9am Sunday

Examples of Cyw shows:



Singing and Dancing:

- Do Re Mi Dona
- Dathlu 'da Dona
- Jambori



Physical activity:

- Heini



Awr fawr on S4C

4pm - 5pm Monday to Friday

Stwnsh on S4C

5pm - 6pm Monday to Friday

Stwnsh Sadwrn on S4C

5pm - 6pm Monday to Friday

Websites:

Miri Meithrin: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/mirimeithrin>
BBC Bitesize: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zdm3nrd>

Twinkl Cymru: <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/>
Booktrust: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/poridrwystori>



APPS:



Cyfri gyda Cyw



LearnCymraeg



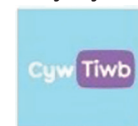
Llyfrau Hwyl Magi Ann



Byd Cyw



Llyfrau Bach Magi Ann



Cyw Tiwb



Dewin a Doti



Hoff Ganeuon Selog



Bys a Bawd



Llyfrau Magi Ann 2



Amser Stori Cyw



Betsan a Roco
yn y Pentref



Llyfrau Cymraeg/
Welsh Books



Hoff Llyfrau Selog



Frequently asked questions by parents

“

So what does Welsh-medium education help?

Welsh-medium education has a very simple aim - to enable children to become fully fluent in both English and Welsh while teaching all the other subjects across the curriculum. Young children learn languages remarkably easily – it's by making the most of this potential that Welsh-medium education has become so popular.

”

“

We don't speak Welsh at home - would that make my child different to others?

No, in fact, the vast majority - over 81 % – of children in Welsh-medium education in Merthyr Tydfil do not speak Welsh at home. So coming from a non-Welsh speaking background is absolutely fine and the curriculum is designed with that in mind. Welsh-medium schools do not expect children to speak Welsh when they start, but will help those children to become fluent in Welsh before the end of their first year.

”

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Does Welsh-medium education have lower standards for English?

No, children leaving Welsh-medium primary schools are expected to reach exactly the same standard of English as those in English-medium primary schools. In secondary schools children in Welsh-medium education sit exactly the same GCSEs and A-levels as those in English-medium schools.

”



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How can I help my child with homework if I don't speak Welsh?

As most children don't speak Welsh at home, Welsh-medium schools are very experienced in supporting both pupils and parents.

For younger pupils, homework instructions will be given in writing in both English and Welsh. At a later age, children will be able to explain their work to their parents themselves. Research suggests that dealing with their work in two languages can actually help children understand the subject that they are studying.

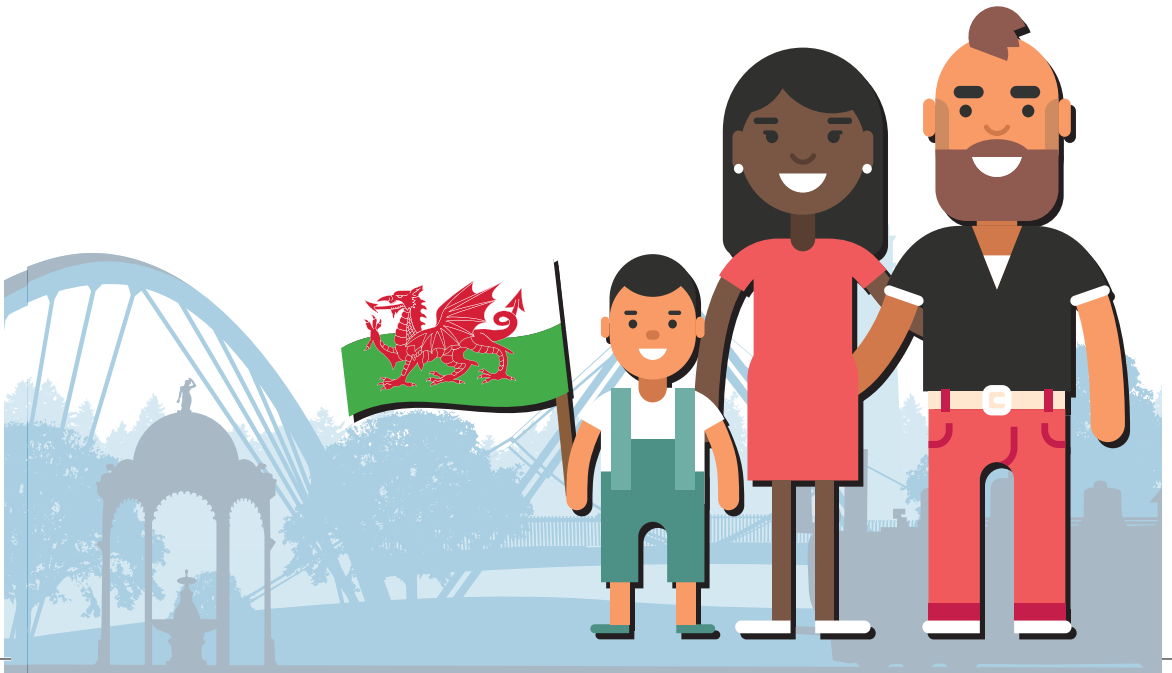
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What if my child has additional learning needs?

The Welsh-medium schools within Merthyr Tydfil provide effective support when children have been identified with additional learning needs.

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How is Welsh taught in Meithrin and Welsh medium Schools?

When children begin learning Welsh, they will be immersed in the language from the start. This is an internationally recognised method of learning languages now included in countries such as Canada and the Basque Country.

Welsh is spoken throughout the Foundation Phase (nursery to Year 2) after this, children will have lessons in English and use English in some of their lessons across the curriculum.

Moving up

Any child who is fluently bilingual at primary school can transfer seamlessly into Welsh-medium education at secondary school. In exactly the same way as in primary school, Welsh and English are taught as individual subjects in Welsh-medium education. Other subjects including extra-curricular activities are taught through the medium of Welsh. In this way, the young person's bilingualism is maintained and developed throughout their education. A young person who received a Welsh-medium education at primary would be expected to continue with that programme at secondary school so that they can develop their language skills in English and in Welsh until they leave secondary school.

Latecomers

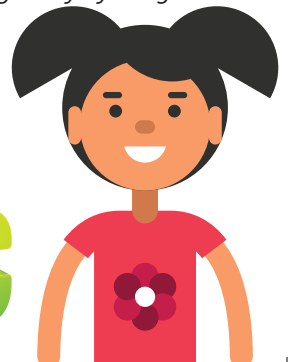
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council welcomes enquiries from latecomers to Welsh Medium Education. Pupils may be given additional language support to strengthen their immersions into Welsh language education and this has proved to be successful. Please contact your catchment area Welsh Medium School for more information.

"A huge reason for sending my son to a Welsh medium school is that I know that it will broaden his opportunities. By speaking Welsh I feel that my son will always have an advantage over those who can't speak Welsh. There's a great sense of community amongst Welsh speakers"

Bethan - parent at Ysgol Rhyd y Grug and teacher at Ysgol Rhydywaun

"I wanted my children to have Welsh as a first language as I feel that it will provide greater job opportunities when they are older. I also prefer the ethos within Welsh schools"

Sharon - parent at Ysgol Rhyd y Grug & Ysgol Rhydywaun



A bilingual education experience 4-18 year olds

In Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council, there are two Welsh-medium primary schools, both with nursery provision. The two Welsh medium primary schools feed the secondary school, Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun which is in Penywaun, Rhondda Cynon Taff. Transport is provided for children to attend.

Plans are underway to increase/develop Welsh medium school places in the Gurnos area.

For a map of school catchment areas

<https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/do-it-online/find-it/school-catchment-areas-welsh-medium-schools/>

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhyd-Y-Grug
Aberfan
Merthyr Tudful
CF48 4NT
01685 728990
office@rhyd-y-grug.merthyr.sch.uk

Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun
Rhodfa Lawrence
Penywaun
Rhondda Cynon Taf
CF44 9ES
01685 813500
ysgol@rhydywaun.org

Ysgol Santes Tydfil - Safi'r Gurnos
Cedar Way
Gurnos
Merthyr Tydfil
CF47 9PA
01685 351815
office@santestudful.merthyr.sch.uk

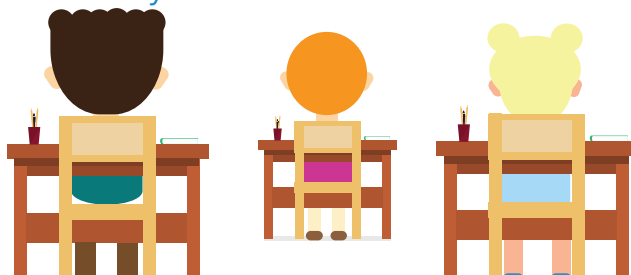
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg
Santes Tudful
Heol Pantyffyn
Merthyr Tudful
CF47 0HU
01685 351815
office@santestudful.merthyr.sch.uk

Swyddog Hyrwyddo a Safonau'r
Gymraeg
Coleg Merthyr
Ynysfach
Merthyr Tudful
CF48 1AR
01685 726000
l.harrington@merthyr.ac.uk

Transport

For information on school transport:

<https://www.merthyr.gov.uk/resident/schools-and-learning/learner-travel-information/>



Next steps...College, University?

Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol is a Higher and Further Educational establishment which provides the opportunities for students to study through the medium of Welsh in all Universities across Wales.

As pupils from Welsh-medium schools are bilingual, they can choose to follow college and university courses in either language (or both). Welsh Universities are offering more and more university degrees (partially or completely) through the medium of Welsh.

Young people can receive a bursary at higher education level to study modules through the medium of Welsh.

A growing number of Welsh-medium courses are available in Further Education. So students from Welsh-medium schools are able to follow either Welsh-medium or English-medium courses at college or university, in Wales and beyond.

The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol's Language Skills Certificate has been developed to enable students who are studying in Wales to gain a certificate that shows evidence of their language skills, and their ability to work through the medium of Welsh. Many employers have expressed their support for the Certificate, including ITV Wales and Welsh Government.

"As a student I chose to follow part of my university degree course through the medium of Welsh. This has presented many opportunities, such as a work placement in my Local Authority and a meeting with the Welsh Language Commissioner. I'm also a student ambassador and use this as an opportunity to promote the benefits of studying a degree bilingually"

Hannah - Undergraduate at Swansea University

"I am so glad that my parents chose to send me to a Welsh school, being bilingual has given me so many opportunities when I was growing up, and throughout my life. I am now working in a Welsh Language Primary School and use my Welsh everyday"

Katie - former pupil of Ysgol Rhydywaun



Welsh for Adults

Some parents, after choosing a Welsh-medium school for their child, decide to learn Welsh as well. It's a great opportunity to learn together, to spend quality time together practice your language skills.

The Learn Welsh Glamorgan Centre is a one-stop shop if you want to learn or improve your Welsh, providing courses at all levels across the area, with a wide choice of days and times.

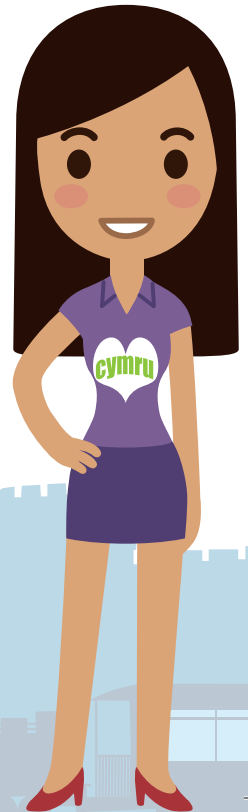
There will be opportunities to meet other learners in day schools, block courses, coffee mornings, book clubs, dinner clubs and much more.

The University of South Wales delivers courses in Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Bridgend on behalf of the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

For more information about courses in the area, please contact us on 01443 483 600 or email: learnwelsh@southwales.ac.uk

"I had always wanted to learn Welsh, but thought I had left it too late. I am so glad that I started attending a weekly Welsh class for adult beginners in Merthyr Tydfil. My Welsh language skills are developing, along with my confidence to use Welsh with other learners and Welsh speakers. I am proud that I am learning the language of my home country! I hope to continue studying and to progress and further develop my skills."

Angie Morgans - Welsh learner



Our Welsh Community in Merthyr Tydfil

Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful

Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful work closely with the local Welsh medium schools to ensure that children and young people have access to high quality participatory arts opportunities and cultural experiences. The main aim of the organisation is to promote and increase the use of Welsh in the community. We provide and host a wide range of courses, workshops, performances, clubs and recreational opportunities for children, young people, adults and families to enjoy.

Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful is based in Canolfan and Theatr Soar in Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tudful, a Welsh language and cultural hub in the heart of Merthyr's Town Centre. While Canolfan Soar is home to all of the Welsh language organisations that serve the Merthyr Tudful Borough, Theatr Soar has enabled the Menter Iaith to reach out to the wider Merthyr Community.

Organisations based at Canolfan a Theatr Soar include:

Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful – community participation

Lingo Soar Cyf. – Welsh translation service

Dysgu Cymraeg Morgannwg – Welsh learning

Urdd Gobaith Cymru – Youth work

Mudiad Meithrin – Cylch Meithrin Soar

Helo Blod – Language use in business

Canolfan Soar is also home to:

Caffi Soar open 6 days a week, for coffee and snacks, the café also caters for events, meetings and parties held at the centre.

Siop Llyfrau'r Enfys, -Welsh language bookshop supporting Welsh medium education. The shop stock cards, gifts, and a selection of local crafts.

Both Caffi Soar and Siop Llyfrau'r Enfys host their own cultural, Welsh language and bilingual events.

Theatr Soar is a 200-seat theatre space and dance studio, providing termly programme of Welsh, English and Bilingual events and performances. The Theatr is also available for community and public hire.



Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful offers a wide range of volunteering and work experience opportunities for adults and young people. Canolfan a Theatr Soar support the use of Welsh in the community by offering a safe and comfortable environment where people and families can forge new friendships and join new networks that broaden horizons. The Welsh language is seen as an enabler that enriches our community.

Contact details:

Menter Iaith Merthyr Tudful, Canolfan a Theatr Soar, Pontmorlais,
Merthyr Tudful CF47 8UB

☎ : 01685 722176

f : Canolfan a Theatr Soar

<http://www.theatrsoar.co.uk/>

🐦 : @TheatrSoar

Urdd Gobaith Cymru

The Urdd is a youth organisation, which offers opportunities and events to all the young people of Wales (up to the age of 25). It is a lively organisation which is a part of the life of children who attend Welsh medium education, through sports, music, the Eisteddfod, residential centres and youth groups. <https://www.urdd.cymru/cy/>

Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RhAG)

Parents for Welsh Medium Education exists to support and promote education through the medium of Welsh throughout Wales and to ensure equal opportunities for those who wish their children to be taught through the medium of Welsh. <http://www.rhag.cymru/>

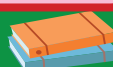
Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg Cangen
Merthyr Tudful rhagmerthyr@gmail.com

Merthyr Tydfil Family Information Service

For information on childcare, education, activities and services for families contact the Merthyr Tydfil Family Information Service. Helpline: 01685 727400 <https://www.merthyrfis.org/welsh-medium-education-and-resources-for-parents/welsh-medium-education-resources/>

Merthyr Tydfil Public Library

Ask your local library for Welsh or bilingual books - there are many with simple Welsh and English words side by side so you can begin to learn the language alongside your child. ☎ : 01685 725258 <https://www.merthyrlibraries.co.uk/>



Directory of Welsh Language Services

Mudiad Meithrin

Supporting young children in Wales to access early years services and experiences through the medium of Welsh.

☎ : 01970 639639 <https://www.meithrin.cymru/>

🐦 : @MudiadMeithrin

f : Mudiad Meithrin

f : Mudiad Meithrin De Ddwyrain

We're also on Instagram.

Cymraeg i Blant

Cymraeg i blant is a national scheme that supports parents to follow a bilingual journey by choosing Welsh medium childcare and education for their child.

☎ : 01970 639639 <https://www.meithrin.cymru/cymraeg-for-kids/>

f : Cymraeg i blant Merthyr

Welsh Government Cymraeg Website

Offers information on a range of Welsh language matters and is a portal to other sites - events finder, app of the week, Welsh for Adults courses and much more. <https://learnwelsh.cymru/>

Welsh Language Commissioner

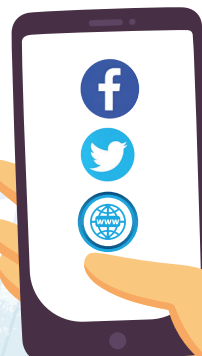
The Commissioner's functions include:

- promoting the use of the Welsh language
- facilitating the use of the Welsh language
- working towards ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language by imposing duties on some organisations to comply with standards relating to the Welsh language
- conducting inquiries into matters relating to the Commissioner's functions
- investigating interference with the individual's freedom to use the Welsh language

<http://www.comisiynyddygyymraeg.cymru/Pages/Croeso.aspx>

☎ : 0345 6033 221

E-mail: post@welshlanguagecommissioner.wales



Parents quotes:

Neither my husband nor I are Welsh speakers. We were nervous at first and during the first year wondered if we were doing our child a disservice by not being able to speak the language that they were learning. However as time went on we were shocked to see just how quickly our child was able to pick up the language and effectively communicate in both English and Welsh, slipping easily between both languages.

Claire – Parent at Ysgol Santes Tudful

The reasons I chose a Welsh medium education for my children were to give them a sense of heritage and culture as well as wanting to maximise their future opportunities by being bilingual and also the longing myself to want to be a Welsh speaker.

Rebecca - Parent at Ysgol Rhydywaun



I started learning Welsh when I was 14 years old and I thought I was NEVER going to succeed. But luckily I had a fantastic teacher. I was so lucky, because I enjoyed acting and learning Welsh. I had a job in television and have been very fortunate to work on the Welsh soap opera Pobl-Y-Cwm for nearly twenty years.

Donna Edwards- Actress

