

Begin the Bilingual Journey.
Choose Welsh Medium
Education in Torfaen.



Being Bilingual
in Torfaen

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Experts estimate that more than half the world's population can speak more than one language - give your child the opportunity to do so too.



Cymraeg



In Torfaen nearly 8,641 speak Welsh and around 9.84% of our children already enjoy their education through the medium of Welsh in one of our 4 Welsh medium schools.

Did you know that almost 98% of pupils in Welsh medium education in Torfaen come from non-Welsh speaking homes?

Working together to support you throughout the learning journey.

What does being bilingual mean?

It's the ability to live your everyday life with two languages.

As a parent, deciding on your child's education will be one of the most important decisions you'll make. More and more parents can testify that choosing Welsh medium education for their child has been a positive and worthwhile experience and an advantage when starting in work.

- **We've created this booklet to answer your questions and let you know why it's great to be bilingual.**
- **This booklet also maps a clear Welsh medium journey for your child and you - through the pre-school and school years from nursery, to primary, secondary schools, further education and beyond.**

Choose a Welsh medium education for your child and they'll become part of Wales' million Welsh speakers by 2050.







What are the benefits of being bilingual?

- Education**
- Bilingual children tend to be more successful in education and perform better in tasks.
 - Bilingual people find it easier to learn additional languages.
 - Children in Welsh medium education do just as well, if not better, in English as children in English medium education.

- Career**
- Speaking two languages is an extra skill to put on your application form.
 - Bilingual people earn an average of 11% more.
 - Employers are always looking for bilingual staff so they can offer the best bilingual service.

- Health**
- Research shows that being bilingual delays the onset of Dementia and other symptoms of Alzheimer.

- Life**
- Speaking two languages widens your horizons.
 - Speaking Welsh gives you access to many aspects of Welsh culture, history and identity.
 - Speaking Welsh can provide a key to a rich community life.
 - Speaking Welsh gives you a strong sense of identity and belonging.
 - Switching between languages gives you self-confidence and pride.
 - Speaking more than one language can make you more understanding of other cultures.



EVIDENCE:

- A report on 'The Advantages of Bilingualism in Welsh and English' by Professor Colin Baker
- Estyn Report - English in key stages 2 and 3
- Children with two languages excel at school – The Times Article
- Welsh speakers 'more likely to get top qualifications and jobs' – Wales Online Article
- A Report on 'Delaying the onset of Alzheimer disease' by Fergus I.M Craik, PHD, Ellen Bialystock, PHD and Morris Freedman, MD.
- Bilingual people twice as likely to recover from a stroke – The Telegraph Article

Frequently Asked Questions.

But we don't speak Welsh!

We're here to help! You'll find well-established support systems in both English and Welsh in most schools, so parents and carers can support children's learning in the home.

What about their English language skills?

Don't worry! Children are fluent in both Welsh and English when they leave Welsh medium primary school.

Why Welsh medium education?

The quality of education is excellent. It's easy to learn a language from an early age, and children enjoy their lives in Welsh and English!

Do they have to go to a Cylch Meithrin?

No they don't but the sooner they start their contact with the Welsh Language the better. However they can start their journey at any point as they will pick it up very quickly.

What can my child do outside of school?

Have a look at the useful list of Welsh and bilingual organisations and societies at the back of this booklet - and get in touch!

How can my child get to our local school?

We're here to help. Torfaen Council provide free school transport for pupils with a home address 2 miles or more from the nearest Welsh medium primary school, and 3 miles or more from the nearest Welsh medium secondary school. All our learners are transported on safe and comfortable buses which are driven by individuals who have safeguarding clearance to drive for the Council.

Find out more about our Learner Travel Policy and Arrangements here, <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/EducationLearning/SchoolsColleges/FinancialSupport/School-travelsupport/Transport-Entitlement.aspx>





Will I be able to help with my child's Welsh homework?

Yes! Many schools provide the work in Welsh and English. Why not encourage your child to explain the work to you first? As they explain, they will go through the problem step by step. This helps them to get to grips with what they need to do. And remember, it's your child's homework - not yours. The most important thing is to be positive and to give praise and encouragement!

Can I learn Welsh at the same time as my child?

Yes! There's loads of courses available. Visit learnwelsh.cymru and search for courses in your area which run along side the same term dates as our schools.



How is Welsh taught in a Welsh medium school?

When children begin learning Welsh, they will be immersed in the language from the very start. Staff will use a wide range of strategies to enable pupils to understand when their Welsh is limited and provide appropriate support and intervention to embed the language.

- Welsh is the language of education from Nursery until Year 2 and then children will have lessons in English in year 3 and use English in their lessons across the curriculum.
- This method of learning is recognised internationally and used in countries such as Canada and the Basque Country.

Latecomers

You can choose Welsh medium education at any point during the journey. We do not currently offer pupils additional support to transfer to Welsh medium schools however, immersion provision is a key development in Torfaen's new Welsh in Education Plan 2022-32. And remember they do not have to attend a Cylch Meithrin to start in a Welsh medium primary school. Interested? Get in touch with your local Welsh medium school (details can be found on page 14 onwards) or Torfaen Council for more information: [**admissions@torfaen.gov.uk**](mailto:admissions@torfaen.gov.uk)

What do other people say?

Welsh education was not my first choice initially, however speaking with a friend who had sent her children to welsh medium school and discussing the benefits of being bi-lingual, my mind was made up. There are not many opportunities in the UK to learn and speak two languages fluently, we are so lucky in Wales to have that opportunity.

Welsh medium has introduced my children to the Urdd, Eisteddfod, Llangrannog with the welsh culture, heritage and tradition at the forefront. Welsh folk dancing, traditional stories , poems , St Dwynwen's day, these are all opportunities my children have had to embrace their welsh culture and enjoy learning the beautiful language. Ysgol Bryn Onnen has been a incredible school to give my children a fantastic learning environment with warm, friendly staff providing the best education.

Roberta Nash, parent at Ysgol Bryn Onnen, Pontypool

Welsh education gave our children the best start in life. They are both fully bilingual which will open up a lot more opportunities in the future.

Martyn Redwood, dad of two

Going to a Welsh language school helps children to learn about their culture. It gives children great opportunities to learn and sets them on a path for the future.

Sandra Bartlett Jones, mum of two

Choosing a Welsh medium school was always on the cards and as a result both our daughters are thriving, with one in the nursery and the other in reception. We are happy with the school and the way they are opening up our daughters lives to the Welsh language and the opportunities this will create later on in their lives.

Rebecca Renshaw, parent at Ysgol Gymraeg Cwmbrân

As parents, having both been raised in first language Welsh speaking homes and having gone through Welsh medium education, giving our children the same rich learning opportunities was something we felt passionate about. Being able to give them that feeling of pride in their culture and heritage, the ability to think creatively and to communicate in two languages.

Emma Rogers, Parent



The Journey.

0-2
YEARS
OLD

Cymraeg for Kids

Cymraeg for Kids is here to support you as new parents to speak and use a little bit of Welsh with your baby.

Join our weekly support groups for practical tips and advice on how to use bilingual books and apps at home.

Register for our free groups: baby massage and yoga, Welsh rhymetime & sign, Me and my baby and Cuppa & Chat at **meithrin.cymru**

Cylch Ti a Fi

You can take your baby to a 'Ti a Fi' parent and toddler group where children play together, listen to Welsh stories and sing Welsh songs. There are more than 500 groups in communities across Wales and non-Welsh-speaking parents and carers are warmly welcomed.

2-4
YEARS
OLD

Clwb Cwtsh

Introduces Welsh words and phrases for parents and carers to use at home with their young children.

Cylch Meithrin

Mudiad Meithrin is a National Organisation with cylchoedd meithrin (nursery groups) across Wales for children from two until they go to primary school.



3-4
YEARS
OLD

Nursery Unit

Some primary schools have Welsh medium or bilingual nursery units for three-year-olds.

4-11
YEARS
OLD

Primary School

Welsh medium education is offered in every county in Wales. Welsh is the main language of the classroom and the schoolyard in Welsh medium primary schools. Your child will study and socialise in Welsh.

11-18
YEARS
OLD

Secondary School

We have one Welsh medium secondary school. Your child will study most subjects through the medium of Welsh or bilingually plus participate in the full bilingual life of the school to enable them to play an integral role in their community and progress onto further and higher education as appropriate.

16+
YEARS
OLD

Further Education






Many colleges in Wales also offer courses in Welsh. Contact directly for more information.

Higher Education

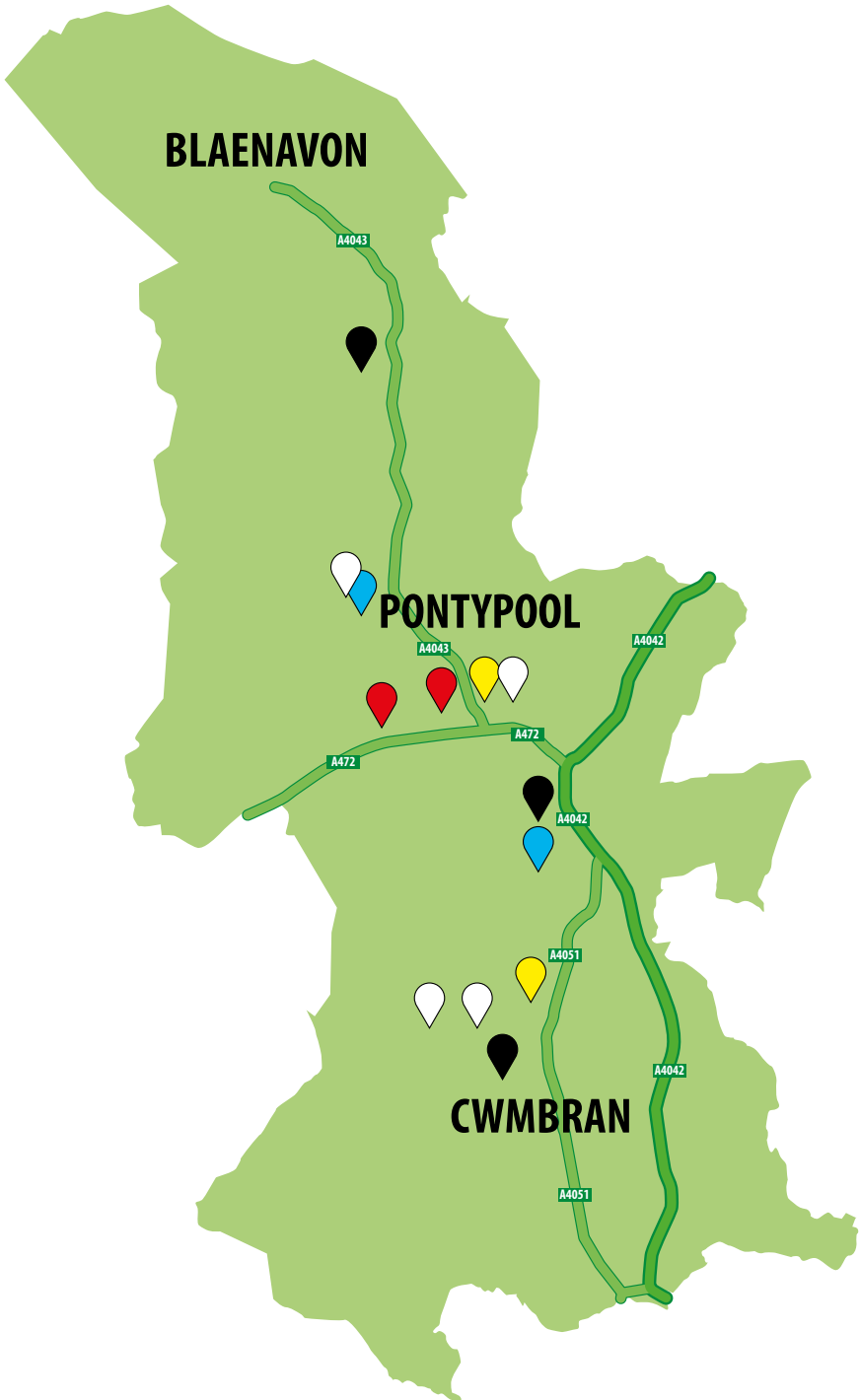
Welsh Universities provide Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses through the medium of Welsh. Scholarships are also available for pupils who undertake their studies in Welsh.

What next?

- Use our directory to find your nearest provision.
- Contact them and let them know you're interested in registering your child.
- Begin your bilingual journey by choosing a Welsh medium future for you and your family.

| Provision | Number of settings | Appearance on map |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Flying Start funded childcare places at Welsh medium childcare settings | 2 |  |
| Welsh medium childcare provider delivering Nursery | 2 |  |
| Cylch Meithrin in Torfaen for 2-5 year olds | 4 |  |
| Independent Welsh Medium After School Clubs | 3* |  |
| Bilingual Childminders | 2 |  |

* One after school club will also offer full day care from early 2022.



A little help.



I Blant
For Kids

Cymraeg for Kids

Cymraeg for kids offer support, advice and information to prospective and new parents on how to bring Welsh into the home from birth.

www.meithrin.cymru/cymraeg-for-kids

Cymraeg i Blant Torfaen

cymraegiblant@meithrin.cymru

@Cymraegforkids

01970 639639



Mudiad Meithrin

Organises 'Ti a Fi' parent and toddlers groups. It offers Meithrin (nursery) groups for children from two years old until primary school age.

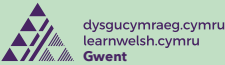
www.meithrin.cymru

Mudiad Meithrin

post@meithrin.co.uk

@Mudiad Meithrin

01970 639639



Learn Welsh Gwent

Your one stop shop if you want to learn or improve your Welsh. The Gwent Welsh for Adults Centre provide courses at all levels across the area, and with a wide choice of days and times.

If you have children under 7, look for the Welsh for the Family courses.

www.learnwelsh.cymru

Welsh for Adults - Gwent

welsh@coleggwent.ac.uk

@CanolfanCymraegiOedolion
GwentWelshForAdultsCentre

01495 333710



Welsh4Parents

This site is a directory containing links to a wide range of Welsh language resources available on a variety of digital platforms.

www.Welsh4Parents.cymru

Rhieni Dros Addysg Gymraeg

help@parents4welsh.cymru

@RhAG1




The Urdd

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.

www.urdd.cymru

 Urdd Gobaith Cymru

 helo@urdd.org

 @Urdd




Menter Iaith Torfaen

Provide, promote and co-ordinate Welsh arts, educational and cultural activities and services in Torfaen such as after-school clubs and Welsh conversation groups.

www.menterbgtm.cymru

 menterbgtm

 01495 755861


 @MenterBGMT1




Family Information Service (FIS)

For information on childcare, education, activities and services for families contact Torfaen Family Information Service.

www.torfaenfis.org.uk

 Torfaen Family Information Services

 fis@torfaen.gov.uk

 0800 0196330

