

Ysgol Penglais School  
Year 8 Curriculum  
2020 - 2021



## Vision and Values of Penglais School

Ysgol Penglais is a happy, ambitious and high achieving school where everyone is respected and valued. We are a strong community where everyone cares for each other, knowing that only through collaboration and respect will we achieve and become our very best. The school is vibrant with student and staff co-operating, learning, thinking and working hard. We recognise that overcoming challenges is key to success and by developing bravery, confidence and resilience our students will become successful citizens of their communities, Wales and the world.

We will achieve this vision together through our school values:

**BE RESPECTFUL AND  
KIND**

**BE AMBITIOUS AND  
RESILIENT**

**DEVELOP  
INDEPENDENCE AND  
CONFIDENCE**

**TAKE PRIDE IN  
BELONGING TO OUR  
COMMUNITY**

**CELEBRATE DIVERSITY  
AND SUCCESS**



Please contact your Year Leader, Miss K Thomas or the Form tutor should you need further information.

## Important Contacts

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## Key Dates for Year 8

<b>Progress Report 1</b>	November 2020
<b>Progress Report 2</b>	March 2021
<b>Parents Evening</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b>Progress report 3 + Full report</b>	May 2021
<b>Exams</b>	Week commencing 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>Progress Report 4 &amp; Exam Results</b>	June 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to Year 8. The second year in secondary school for your child. They have had a year to settle, make new friends, and establish themselves in extra-curricular activities that we offer here at Penglais.

For all students the challenges are varied: sometimes exciting and sometimes daunting. The need to be self-motivated; the confidence to ask when unsure; developing coping strategies; getting organised; completing work both in school and at home, and start thinking about GCSE choices ready for when the time comes in year 9.

Year 8 can be a time where students sometimes become distracted and lose focus. We, at Penglais, are committed to ensuring that our students continue to work hard and strive for the best. We will continue to set high expectations of our year 8 students, encouraging them to be excellent role models for the year below, maintaining the highest standard of behaviour and continue to produce excellent work throughout this academic year. We will track their progress closely through key piece tasks and will celebrate achievement while also being quick to intervene if anyone is not meeting their target grades.

It can be a very stressful time for you as parents/guardians too. Nevertheless, the evidence shows that the greater the parent/guardian support the greater the results. You are the expert on your own child and have always been their most important teacher. Your support, encouragement and interest can make a spectacular difference to your child's motivation and ability to cope with the demands of school.

Please remember that whatever your individual child's needs, your chief role will always be that of the person who cares most, champion of their needs and admirer of every achievement. The most important role you will play is to support and encourage them to be the best version of themselves throughout the year.

As a school we will do our utmost to ensure the success of your child. Strong links between school and home will be vital and it is encouraging to have spoken to many parents/guardians already. This guide is designed to give you the key information you will need to support your child through the coming year. When new information arises, we will be quick to communicate that to you via the school's Parent Mail service. Classchart is used to share information about homework and your child's behaviour. There is also a wealth of information on the school's website, [www.penglais.org.uk](http://www.penglais.org.uk). When there are concerns about your child's progress, we will contact you, however, we also welcome contact from home if you have concerns. By working together both the school and parents/guardians can ensure the best possible outcomes for your child.

Yours sincerely,

Miss K Thomas

Year 8 Leader

## Homework for Year 8 students

- Each homework session should take students around 20-30 minutes.
- Some homework tasks may take longer than 30 minutes and these will be allocated two or more homework sessions.
- Students should write down their homework sessions each day in their planner.

### **Supporting your child with their homework**

#### **General Advice:**

- All students are different and have different needs. Some will require a lot of support from you, others will require the minimum. It is most important that you have an honest discussion with your child – “How can I support you?” Many children will be put off if you become over-involved or controlling. Ensure you establish that you are there to support.
- Consider using a reward structure to motivate your child. Rewards don't have to be financial or very big; talk to your child about what they would value, an extra night out, and extension to the time they can come in, a trip with friends, being let off household chores etc. Don't make rewards dependent on results, this can lead to added disappointment if they don't do as well as expected; rewards should be based on effort.
- Clear boundaries are vital. Whilst you do not want to be seen to 'nag' you also have a duty to check that your child is doing their homework properly. Explain this to them from the outset. This will help avoid unnecessary accusations of 'nagging'.
- All students will fall behind, feel unmotivated or overwhelmed, or struggle with the balance of social and school demands at times. When your child feels like this, getting cross can have a negative effect. Talk to them about the issues, acknowledge their feelings, help them to find a solution, help them prioritise.
- Be flexible. Use the 80/20 rule (if your child is sticking to what they are supposed to be doing 80% of the time, they are probably doing alright!)
- Hours can quite happily be eaten up by online communications, and it is important that you set boundaries for the use of Snapchat, Instagram and other social media, just as you would for going out or watching TV.

#### **Setting your child up for homework:**

- Talk to your child about how you can support them and what they would find helpful.
- Help your child to plan a realistic homework timetable. It will take an investment of your time (probably an hour or so), but it will make a big difference to their work. Plan in favourite TV shows, dinner time, time with friends and family, chores, etc. It must be realistic if you want it to work.
- If possible try to create a clutter free area in which your child can do their homework or agree a dedicated time when they can use the dinner/kitchen table to work. Try to keep this time and area quiet.

- All students have a school planner that you can look at to check homework assignments and deadlines.

**Supporting your child while they do their homework:**

- Provide snacks and drinks during extended homework periods.
- Be flexible – if they want to go out to out during an agreed homework time, discuss when they will make the time up.
- Be sensitive to the pressure your child may be feeling, let them know that if they are really not up to it on odd days, it isn't the end of the world. Let it go when it really matters to them and remind them of all the good work they have done and will continue to do.
- Keep up with regular 'check-ins' and don't nag in between times. Show an interest on how their homework is going, talk through any difficulties and be prepared to help them if necessary.

**Keep things in perspective. Your child may not be doing things the way you would do them, or as often as you would like, but they are doing the best they can.**

# English

In English, you will develop your **reading, writing, and oracy skills**. You will study a wide range of **fiction** and **non-fiction** over the year, including a novel called *Holes*, a selection of poems and an **introduction** to the works of Shakespeare. You will also complete **speaking and listening** tasks such as presentations and group discussions. It's important to check and edit your work regularly to make improvements; this should be done in class and as part of your homework.

Term	Name of Unit	Key Task Type	Key Task
Autumn 1	<b>Improving Schools</b>	Oracy and Writing	Discussion on uniforms and formal letter
Autumn 2	<b><i>Holes</i></b> by Louis Sachar	Reading	Character study essay
Spring 1	<b><i>Holes</i></b> by Louis Sachar	Oracy	Discussion on town curfews
Spring 2	<b>Finches' Cottage</b>	Writing	'Return to Finches Cottage'; Narrative task based on short story
Summer 1	<b>Introduction to Shakespeare</b>	Reading	Comprehension and other skills completed in first half of the Year 8 exam
Summer 2	<b>Exam Preparation and Exam</b>  <b>Speaking and Listening Skills</b>	Writing	Formal letter writing completed in the second half of the Year 8 exam

The smaller tasks that build up to each key piece are also an indicator of how your child is doing in lessons. All tasks help to build the skills required for either GCSE English Language or English Literature and we treat the GCSE course as a five-year framework to fully prepare our students.

Please note that the order of the programmes of learning may change for your child according to the needs of the teaching group.

# Mathematics

Students will practise and extend the skills that you learnt in Year 7. You will also learn new ideas in the six strands of Number, Measure, Geometry, Algebra, Data and Probability. A mixture of procedural and reasoning tasks will be used to help you prepare for the national numeracy tests in April/May.

## Setting

Students are set in maths, on the basis of their results in Year 7 and teacher assessments. There are 3 sets on the A side and 4 sets on the B side. There are opportunities to move set at the end of each half term. Due to Covid, we will start the year teaching in mixed ability tutor groups. This may change later in the year.

## Topics covered

Top, middle and bottom sets have separate topic list. Higher sets go into topics in more depth. Bottom sets focus on aspects of maths which reinforce number skills and/or are likely to be required outside the classroom.

## Helping your child in maths

The best way to help students is by practising topics that they studied 5-10 days ago as this is when many students start to forget the work. You can use the online resources below. This will help secure the ideas in their long-term memory and is more useful than pre-teaching work that they will later be taught in class.

## Online resources

1. <https://corbettmaths.com>

Revision videos on all aspects of the mathematics curriculum, with practice questions and solutions.

2. <https://www.mymaths.co.uk/>

Penglais School subscribes to the mymaths website where you can search for lessons, games and exercises on all maths topics.

Password: penglais    login: median

## Calculators

Although we often expect students to work without a calculator, there will be times when a calculator is required. The recommended calculator is CASIO fx-83GT PLUS. Calculators can be bought from Mr Bentley in B10 for £9.00.

## Times tables: TT Rockstars

One of the most significant factors affecting students' progress in mathematics is their capability with times tables. The best way to give your child a good start is by regularly practising times tables with them.

Students in sets 2, 3 and 4 start every maths lesson starts with 60 times tables questions – students answer as many questions as they can in 3 minutes.

We also set a 10-minute times tables homework every week using the TT Rockstars website (<https://trockstars.com>). Each student has their own login.

## Lesson starters

In order to improve students' recall of knowledge, every lesson will start with a quick low-stake quiz focussing on the most important skills and techniques that are required to secure the best grade possible for each student.

# Science

During year 8 you will study the following:

**Interdependence of living organisms:** Microbes, disease, food chains and photosynthesis.

**Respiration and Digestion:** Respiration, digestion and the effect of drugs on the human body.

**Elements Compounds and Mixtures:** Identifying substances, chemical formulas and word equations.

**Sustainable Materials:** How properties of materials relate to their use and the sustainability of its use.

**Energy and Energy Transformations:** Types of energy and their uses.

**Sound and Light:** Application of light and sound waves.

**There will be a formal assessment at the end of each module.**

**Students will be examined on all topics and skills in the summer. Year 9 sets will be based on the student's performance in end of module assessments and the end of Year 8 exam.**

# Cymraeg / Welsh

## Cymraeg Iaith Gyntaf (First Language)

Ym mlwyddyn 8, bydd disgyblion yn datblygu sgiliau llafar, darllen ac ysgrifennu ac yn cael cyfle i ddechrau ymarfer sgiliau allweddol ar gyfer yr arholiadau TGAU. Byddant yn astudio gwahanol bynciau gan gynnwys Gwyliau a Delwedd ac yn edrych yn fanwl ar destunau yn sôn am ystod o bynciau, testunau trafod a darnau darllen amrywiol.

Tymor	Teitl	Sgil a asesir
Hydref	Grŵp llafar ymateb a rhyngweithio yn trafod Gwyliau ysgol	Llafar
	Araith Mynegi Barn am dwristiaid	Ysgrifennu
Gwanwyn	Darllen am Lydaw (ffeithiol)	Darllen
	Traethawd ' <i>Mae gen i wahanol ddelweddau</i> '	Ysgrifennu
Haf	Gwaith llafar grŵp o 3 – Ymateb llafar i ddarllen	Llafar
	Cyflwyno gwybodaeth ar gyfer cylchgrawn <i>Ble yn y byd?</i>	Ysgrifennu

## Welsh Second Language

Students will further develop their oral, reading and writing skills to build on and extend their knowledge of Welsh learnt in Year 7.

They will study grammar and will also practise proof-reading and translation skills.

They will study 3 themes during the year each lasting for 11 weeks.

<b>Module</b>	<b>Key Task</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Gwyliau / Holidays	Oral Task – group discussion about holidays in Wales	Reading comprehension and responding to the text about holidays
Dathlu Cymru / Celebrating Wales Delwedd /Image	Writing task – email complaining about aspects of a trip to a Welsh attraction  Writing Task – Letter expressing opinions on shopping facilities in Aberystwyth	Oral Task – group discussion choosing a trip to a Welsh attraction  Oral Task – Individual oral discussion on shopping in Aberystwyth
Hamddena / At Leisure	Reading comprehension and responding to texts about leisure activities	Writing Task – Weekend Diary

## Art

Students will experiment with a range of techniques, processes and materials to create exciting outcomes connected to the individual projects throughout the year.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Module/Project title</b>	<b>Key assessment piece</b>
Autumn	Living jewels	A 2D outcome based on insects, using shape, line colour and collage
Spring	Pattern	Create a tribal inspired piece using pattern and shape inspired by other cultures
Summer	Colour theory	Produce a final outcome based on colour blending and layering using colour theory.

## Drama

Students will begin by studying, and producing their own, Radio Dramas; developing and refining key skills learnt in Year 7 as well as learning new skills that will last them their time in Ysgol Penglais and beyond! Students will also learn to create their own performances, using Social Media as a stimulus and a spring pad for ideas. They will explore different styles of theatre throughout the Spring term and use these to develop their work. The summer term sees students study a full play text, which will allow them to enhance their characterisation skills and consider the design process used within theatre. Though Drama may look very different this year due to Covid19 regulations, the department will endeavour to make lessons as practical and engaging as possible!

Term	Module/Project title	Key assessment piece	Homework regularity
Autumn	Radio Drama	1 performance of a short Radio Drama written in pairs.	Homework is set at the discretion of the class teacher and usually coincides with the preparation for assessments.
Spring	Text Study*	1 scripted performance of an extract from the play text studied over the term.	Homework is set at the discretion of the class teacher and usually coincides with the preparation for assessments.
Summer	Melodrama*	1 short performance of a Melodrama	Homework is set at the discretion of the class teacher and usually coincides with the preparation for assessments.

**\*Projects subject to change due to the ever-changing situation around Covid-19.**

## Music

In music lessons, you will continue to build on the skills that you learnt in year 7. Throughout the first term, there will be a particular focus on musicality - looking at the theory behind what we have learnt so far, in a practical and engaging way. All students complete separate composition and performance tasks, as well as listening work based on the GCSE syllabus. We also study particular genres (such as a passing glance at 'The Blues', when we look at improvisation) and look at their stylistic characteristics - as well as learning to play in that style. We also look at music right up to the present day.

All levels of skill are welcomed in the music department. If you'd like to be involved further, all students are welcome to be involved in the extra-curricular life of the music department at Penglais. There are plenty of opportunities to get 'stuck in' - with choir, percussion ensemble, wind band, string orchestra, brass band, folk group, various bands, the A Capella group and plenty more. If you can't see what you want, talk to Mr Budd - we will try to set it up for you!

Instrumental lessons are also available, with visiting peripatetic instrumental teachers provided by Ceredigion Music Service. An instrument hire scheme is also available - further details can be found on the Ceredigion Music Service website.

	<b>Module/Project title</b>	<b>Key assessment piece</b>
Autumn 1	Ensemble Skills / The 'Sight-reading Challenge' (2)	N/A
Autumn 2	Developing Your Musicality – developing improvisation/vamping skills on keyboard/guitar/ukulele.	Christmas Performance (ensembles)
Spring 1	Forms & Devices 1 (developing key skills for GCSE).	n/a
Spring 2	Key Skills 3 – Using Music Technology as a tool for composition (Sibelius/Garageband/Dorico)	"The Sight Reading Challenge"
Summer 1	A closer look at song-writing – how to write and craft a song.	n/a
Summer 2	Classroom Ensemble – putting it all together! ('Musical Futures 1' – guitars, bass, keys, drums, vocals and ukulele).	Classroom Ensemble performance.

## Design and Technology

Students will start the year working on a common project. They will undertake a design task where they will develop research, design and creativity skills. Following the common project, they will undertake four modules in specialist areas with specialist teachers. In these modules they will develop design and make skills.

<b>Module/Project title</b>	<b>Key assessment piece</b>	<b>Homework title</b>	<b>Homework regularity</b>
Systems and control: Portable speaker	Planning	1. Design icons 2. DT numeracy 3. Components	Once per cycle
Product Design: Clocks	Designing	1. Existing products 2. Mood board 3. Numeracy	Once per cycle
Textiles: Hats	Evaluating	1. Risk assessment 2. Testing fabrics 3. Care labels	Once per cycle
Food	Research	1. Eatwell guide 2. Flours 3. Cereals	Once per cycle

**There maybe changes this year due to Covid and limitations on practical work.**

# Geography

Geography is all about understanding the world around us. In Year 8 we will investigate different settlements and find out how they are changing. You will research into how and why your home settlement has changed over the past 15-20 years. Later we will be investigating weather, climate and climatic hazards such as hurricanes. Finally, we will visit natural environments such as the Tropical Rainforests with a particular focus on how they should be developed sustainably.

Term	Module	Key Task
Autumn	What are the characteristics of my local area?	<p><b>Written introduction:</b> "What are the main geographical features of your home area?"</p> <p><b>Annotated map:</b> "What are the main geographical features of my home area?"</p> <p><b>Conclusion and evaluation</b> "How does my settlement compare with other local settlements?"</p>
Spring	What are the challenges and opportunities for global development?	<p><b>Data presentation and analysis:</b> "How do the population structures of the UK and Kenya compare?"</p> <p><b>Balanced discussion:</b> "Can slum societies ever be sustainable?"</p> <p><b>Class debate [and write-up]:</b> "What are the challenges and opportunities of life in slums?"</p>
Summer	What makes the tropical rainforest unique?	<p><b>Annotated diagram:</b> "What is the structure of the tropical rainforest?"</p> <p><b>Balanced discussion:</b> "How could our use of the rainforest be made more sustainable?"</p> <p>End of year exam: Ecosystems</p>

# History

Students will be studying Tudor times, the Stuarts and the Civil War and the Industrial Revolution. This time in History begins with Henry VIII and ends with Queen Victoria. You will be given the opportunity to explore: the reign of Henry VIII, how ordinary people lived during Tudor times, the Spanish Armada, the Civil War, the causes and the impact of the Industrial Revolution.

Period Covered	Module	Key Task / Tests
Autumn Term - Tudors	Who were the Tudors?	Key Task1: Why did the Mary Rose sink? Key Task 2: The Great Tudor Challenge
	Why was religion important in Tudor times?	Key Task 3: Did Mary deserve her nickname 'Bloody Mary'?
	Was the late 16 <sup>th</sup> Century a 'Golden Age' for all Elizabethans?	Key Task 4: The Tudors (test)
Spring Term - Stuarts	Why was the Civil War so important?	Key Task 5: Civil War Battlefield guide
	Oliver Cromwell: hero or villain?	Key Task 6: Oliver Cromwell: hero or villain?
Summer Term – The Industrial Revolution	What was the Industrial Revolution?	Key Task 7: Who was the greatest inventor?
	Did the Industrial Revolution change Britain for the better?	Key Task 8: The Times 1901 (Did the lives of people improve during the 19 <sup>th</sup> century?)
	How did Britain win the Napoleonic Wars?	Key Task 9: End of Year 8 test

Note: Teachers will pick **either** Key Task 2 **or** Key Task

## Modern Foreign Languages

Bonjour/Buenos días/Ni hao.... Students will study French, Mandarin and Spanish (one term for each). You will learn to describe where you live, holidays past and future, the weather, transport, countries, daily routine and what you do in your spare time. You will study cultural aspects about the countries where these languages are spoken and develop ICT skills via our online language programmes. As a Faculty, we aim to facilitate cultural enrichment opportunities and make our students aware of the multi-lingual world in which we live. We will have visits from motivational guest speakers, trips and cultural activities in our calendar of events. These include: The Chinese New Year, El día de los Muertos, Bastille, etc. Globally minded students are the future!

French	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describing myself and family</li><li>• Presenting my opinions on my hobbies</li><li>• Extending tense knowledge</li></ul>
Mandarin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learning high frequency characters</li><li>• Oracy games</li><li>• Cultural awareness programme incorporating meditative practice and martial arts</li></ul>
Spanish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Following the online BBC programme: <i>Mi vida loca</i></li><li>• Key Piece: creating a Hispanic menu using publisher to accompany an oracy task in a Spanish café</li><li>• <i>El día de los Muertos</i> (Day of the Dead)</li></ul>

# Physical Education

The PE curriculum encourages learners to build a platform of skills on which future activity choices can be made. Through creative, competitive and health and fitness activities, students can enjoy participating and gain confidence in their abilities and take greater responsibility for their own well-being.

Term	Module/Project title	Key assessment piece
Autumn	Badminton, Hockey, Fitness and Gymnastics	End of module routine on inversion
Spring	Dance, Basketball, Netball and Fitness	Refined performance showing knowledge of the principles of attack and defence.
Summer	Athletics and striking games	Communicate ideas to enhance and refine team performance and evaluate strengths and weaknesses.

**There may be changes this year due to Covid and limitations on practical work.**

## Religious Education

RE will help you develop important skills for life and learning. In RE this year you'll get the chance to follow in the footsteps of some of the greatest thinkers who have ever lived and to explore some of the most important questions that have ever been asked. What is Hinduism? What kind of person should I be? How do actions have consequences? You'll discover how answers to these questions have affected the lives of people across the world from thousands of years ago to the present day.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Module</b>	<b>Key Task</b>
Autumn	Hinduism	Task 1: What ideas and inventions have changed the world?
Spring	Stereotyping, discrimination and prejudice	Task 2: What can be done differently?
Summer	Buddhism	Task 3: Have we benefitted from the industrial revolution?

## Welsh Baccalaureate

You will study a number of topics under the theme of **Rights and Responsibilities** including global citizenship, hygiene, substance misuse, positive relationships and financial planning. You may have the opportunity to take part in events with external agencies and there will be a number of activities to develop your discussion and writing skills.

There is 1 lesson of WBQ per cycle in year 8 where students cover a number of PSE, WRE topics.

	<b>The Key Tasks will include:</b>
Autumn Term	Writing a formal letter, showing problem solving skills and an understanding of how to develop positive relationships.
Spring Term	Numeracy task to show an understanding of savings, interest and decision making.
Summer Term	Prepare for, and take part in, a discussion on reducing water usage.