

# ARCHDEACON JOHN LEWIS NEWSLETTER

'Strength through knowledge and faith.'

**Friday 21st November 2025**

**Attendance: 93%**

## **Eco-Schools Platinum Award**

We are delighted to announce that our school has achieved the prestigious **Eco-Schools Platinum Award (4th Green Flag)**. This incredible accomplishment reflects the continual, long-term commitment and deep understanding of the Eco-Schools journey within our community.

The Platinum status is a culmination of years of hard work from past and present Eco Committees, as well as the dedication of our staff and pupils. Together, they have embedded sustainable practices across the school and helped create a culture of environmental responsibility that we are truly proud of.

As part of our assessment, the Eco Committee children delivered a fantastic assembly, sharing their learning, celebrating the school's progress, and inspiring everyone to continue making positive changes for our planet.

A huge well done to Miss Conlon and the entire Eco Committee for leading the way and making this outstanding success possible!

Thank you once again for your continued commitment, kindness, and support for our school community.

## **Timings of the School Day**

The start and end times of the school day are important in ensuring a smooth, safe, and well-organised routine for all pupils. Arriving on time helps children settle quickly into learning and reduces disruptions to the school day. At collection time, we kindly ask parents and carers to collect **younger children first**, as this ensures their safety and allows staff to dismiss classes efficiently. Following these timings and procedures helps us keep the school grounds calm and secure and supports a positive end to the day for everyone.

School starts at **8.50am** for all children.

Nursery/Reception, Year 1/2 (Mrs Hodges) and Year 2 (Mrs Bowen) day ends at **3.15pm**.

All other year groups/classes (Year 3 Mrs Bowen/Miss Conlon/Miss Evans-Jones) end at **3.20pm**.

## **St Mary's Brackla**

A big thank you to the church and the diocesan growth enablers for Miss Conlon's class Messy Church coffee morning. A great time was had by all!

## **Christ the King**

Come and celebrate the feast of Christ the King this Sunday at 9:30am at St Mary's Brackla at Archdeacon John Lewis Primary School. The children can dress up in their royal finery for the occasion! There will be lots of craft activities for the children to enjoy.

Thank you for your continued support.

Have a lovely weekend,

**Mrs L Forster**

**Keep in Touch:**

[www.ajlprimary.co.uk](http://www.ajlprimary.co.uk) | 01656 815520 | [admin@archdeaconjohnlewisps.bridgend.cymru](mailto:admin@archdeaconjohnlewisps.bridgend.cymru) | Message us using the School Gateway app

Safeguarding and Child Protection information can be found here: <https://www.ajlprimary.co.uk/whos-who/safeguarding-and-child-protection>

YOU'RE INVITED TO



FEAST OF

‘CHRIST THE KING’

COME DRESSED UP AS A KING, QUEEN,  
PRINCE OR PRINCESS!

SUNDAY CLUB ROYAL CRAFTS!

Sunday 23rd November, 9:30am  
Archdeacon John Lewis Primary School

# Upcoming Events

- **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November:** Sparkle & Cake PTA event
- **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November:** Eucharist, 9:15am. All welcome
- **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> November:** PTA Christmas Fayre and Class Enterprise Stalls
- **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> December:** Audio tests for Year 1 pupils with the School Nursing team
- **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> December:** Nativity Dress Rehearsal (N - Year 3)
- **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December:** Nativity Plays (N - Year 3) 9:30am
- **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December:** Christmas Dinner Day and Christmas Jumper Day
- **Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December:** 'The Roaming Gnome' Christmas show (kindly funded by the PTA)
- **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December:** PTA Christmas Discos (see poster below - please purchase tickets on the gateway app by Weds 10<sup>th</sup> Dec)
- **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December:** Christmas Service in Coity Church (Year 1 - Year 6), 10:00am
- **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December:** Last day of term
- **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January:** INSET Day 3 of 6
- **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January:** All pupils return to school

## Please Keep Us Updated!

Please ensure that your details are kept up to date with the school office. It is essential that we hold up to date address details, phone numbers and email addresses for all parents/carers and emergency contacts.

Any updates to personal information can be submitted on the Gateway app or by email to [admin@archdeaconjohnlewisps.bridgend.cymru](mailto:admin@archdeaconjohnlewisps.bridgend.cymru)



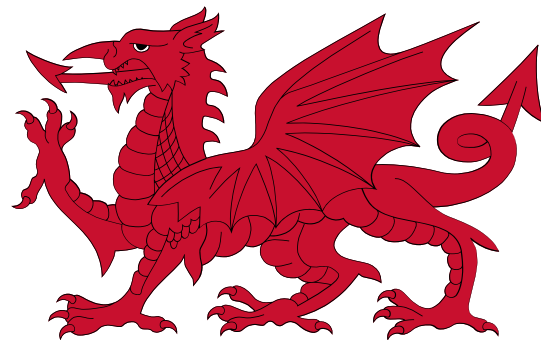
### Keep in Touch:

[www.ajlprimary.co.uk](http://www.ajlprimary.co.uk) | 01656 815520 | [admin@archdeaconjohnlewisps.bridgend.cymru](mailto:admin@archdeaconjohnlewisps.bridgend.cymru) | Message us using the School Gateway app

Safeguarding and Child Protection information can be found here: <https://www.ajlprimary.co.uk/whos-who/safeguarding-and-child-protection>



**Criw Cymraeg**



**Star of the Week**



**Values Certificate**



**'Learned and Wise'**



Thank you to our PCSO, Craig, who worked with our Healthy Schools Ambassadors during Road Safety Week.

They all enjoyed having a go at using the speed gun!





**£1.50**

ARCHDEACON JOHN LEWIS PRIMARY SCHOOL

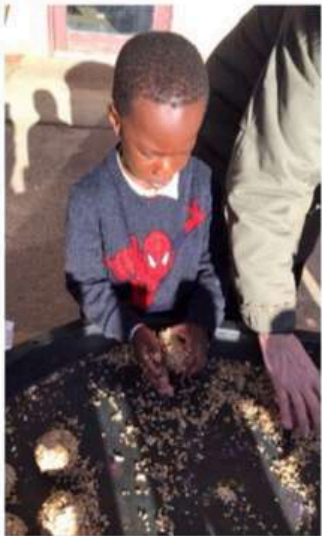
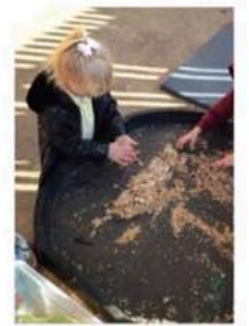
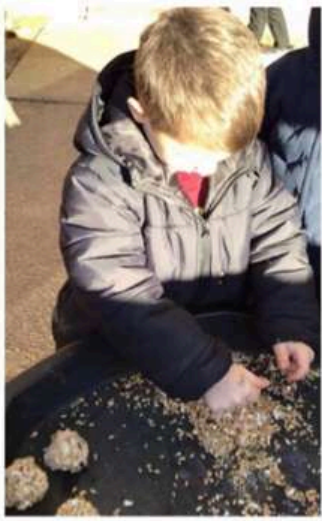
# **PTA CHRISTMAS DISCO**

**FRIDAY 12TH DECEMBER**

**N - Y1: 4:45PM-5:30PM  
(PARENTS TO STAY)**

**Y2 - Y6: 5:45PM-6:45PM**

**BOOK ON THE APP!  
REFRESHMENTS SOLD  
ON THE NIGHT**



**Making bird feeders  
for our garden**



PIC-COLLAGE





## WHO CAN IT HELP SUPPORT?

Play Therapy can support children who are struggling emotionally or are displaying behavioural difficulties after experiencing or being witness to trauma, abuse, neglect, and loss. It is also an effective treatment for helping to rebuild self-worth, self-respect, and friendships within the child's world.

## CONTACT US



Phone

01656 815420



Website

[www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk)

SCAN ME



CYMORTH CYNNAR  
EARLY HELP



## PLAY THERAPY



## THE DELIVERY

- Play therapy requires consistency and familiarity. It helps that the same space is offered at the same day and time every week.
- The therapist will provide carefully selected therapeutic tools; arts and crafts, toys, puppets, games etc.
- The therapist will regularly liaise with parents / carers to discuss the child's progress.
- Confidentiality is key to help the child feel safe and trusted; therefore, it is asked that parents do not ask direct questions regarding their sessions, but to be open to listen when the child is ready to talk.
- Before starting Play Therapy, written consent needs to be provided by the parent/career.

## THE BENEFITS

- Promotes children's mental wellbeing and trauma recovery.
- Reduces emotional, behavioural, and social barriers to learning.
- Fosters healthier relationships with peers and teachers.
- Enhances communication skills.
- Provides a familiar and safe environment for children and their caregivers.
- Accessible to all children.
- Ensures consistency and reliability.



## WHAT IS PLAY THERAPY?

Play Therapy helps children modify their behaviour, understand themselves, and build healthy relationships.

Through interaction with a Play Therapist, children can express and explore their challenges and painful experiences, learning healthier communication, resilience, and emotional literacy.

Play serves as a natural means for children to communicate their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions of their world.





# Messy Church - Miss Conlon's Class



# ARE YOU A YOUNG CARER?



- Are you under the age of 18?
- Do you help look after someone in your family?
- The person you look after could be ill, elderly, have a learning or physical disability, substance or alcohol misuse or a mental health condition

If you are a young carer we can:

Give one to one support

Information on carers issues

Peer support - including trips and monthly groups

Support to manage your caring role alongside your education

We also support Young Adult Carers aged 16 - 25.

Training opportunities

If you would like more information please contact Bridgend Carers Centre

[www.bridgendcarers.co.uk](http://www.bridgendcarers.co.uk)

[alissa.bevan@bridgendcarers.co.uk](mailto:alissa.bevan@bridgendcarers.co.uk)

01656 658479/ 07776 532237



Do you look after a family member or a friend who because of disability, illness, mental health condition or addiction couldn't cope without you?

# If yes, you are a **Young Carer**

## Things a **young carer** might do:

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping
- Physical care, such as helping someone out of bed
- Emotional support, such as talking to someone who is distressed
- Personal care, such as helping someone dress
- Collecting prescriptions and helping to dispense medicine
- Helping someone communicate
- Looking after brothers and sisters



## **Bridgend Young Carers ID Card**

The Young Carer ID is a simple card that can be used by Young Carers to identify themselves, feel validated, and receive the support that they deserve. The Bridgend Young Carer ID Card is part of a Wales-wide scheme, funded by Welsh Government in collaboration with Carers Trust Wales and Local Authorities. The card is to help professionals including doctors, teachers and pharmacists to recognise you are a Young Carer which will help them give you the appropriate support you need and deserve.

## **Contact us to apply for your ID Card**

If you live in Bridgend, Bridgend Young Carers Wellbeing Project team will be able to help you with your ID Card application. Email – [joanne.jenkins2@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.jenkins2@bridgend.gov.uk)

To help make sure we give you and the person you support the best and most appropriate information, advice and help possible please let us know about your caring responsibilities. You can do this by contacting [joanne.jenkins2@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.jenkins2@bridgend.gov.uk) or your school support teacher.



Mrs Bowen's class have been working on **team work** in their KiVa Anti-Bullying lessons this week.



I get to be me



you get to be you



Supporting children with

# SELECTIVE MUTISM



By **Lucy Nathanson**, child therapist, selective mutism specialist, bestselling author and international speaker

Do you know a child who doesn't talk at school but speaks freely at home? Or maybe they talk to friends but not to adults at school?

Selective mutism (SM, also known as situational mutism) is an anxiety-based condition where a child can speak in some situations but not others. Most commonly, they speak freely at home with parents and siblings but are unable to do so in school, with strangers or with extended family members.

Each child with SM is unique. Some are completely non-verbal at school, some may be able to speak to a friend in private, while others may talk openly to peers but are unable to speak to adults.

There is also a distinction between high-profile and low-profile SM. High-profile SM is a consistent inability to speak in certain situations. Low-profile SM is when the fear of disapproval from others is greater than the fear of talking. These children may slip under the radar because they may answer the register or give brief responses to teachers, but these situations are still extremely hard;

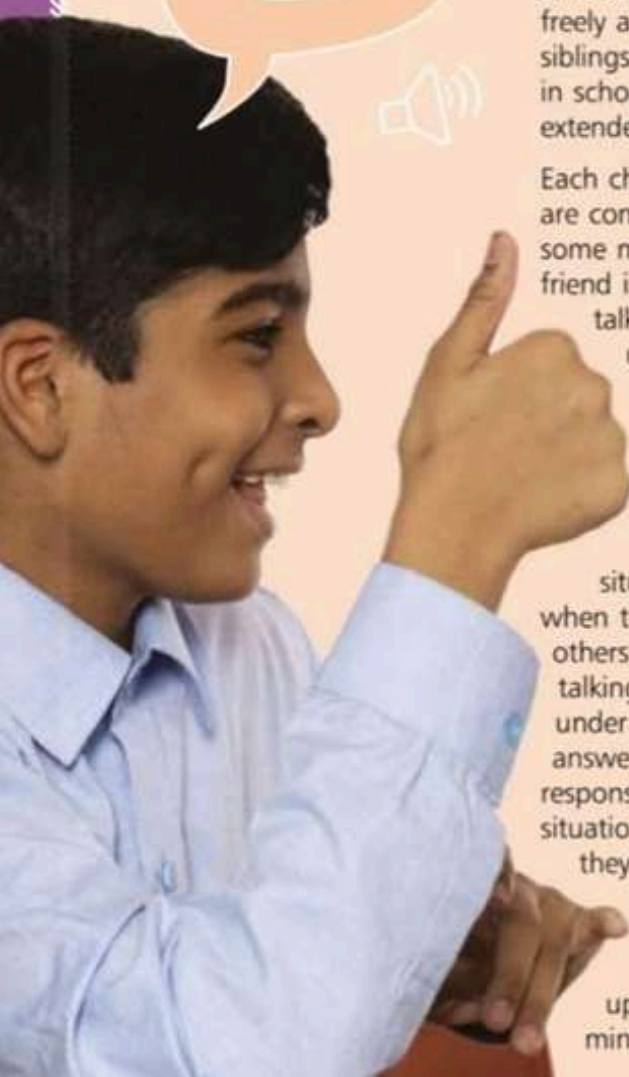
they push themselves to respond as that is the expectation.

These children are unable to speak freely but will muster up the courage to say the bare minimum to get by.

SM is a complex condition as it often affects more than talking. Children may also struggle with physical activities like PE and drama, eating in front of others or using the school toilet (I have known many children with SM to hold all day and be desperate to go to the toilet when they get home). As an anxiety condition, children may be impacted by SM in a multitude of ways, making each child's experience different.

SM is a safeguarding concern as children are usually unable to ask for help. One parent shared how her child choked on a pear but was unable to alert anyone—luckily, a TA noticed her quiet distress. These children aren't choosing to remain silent; they experience extreme anxiety that makes speaking feel impossible. It's akin to severe stage fright in daily situations—a 'freeze' response. Understanding that SM is not stubbornness, rudeness or shyness is crucial in providing support.

Children with SM are often compliant and well-behaved, which can lead to their needs being overlooked. However, it's crucial to take SM seriously. If a child is left to 'outgrow' SM, it can persist



66



into adulthood, leading to further mental health challenges, difficulties in friendships, relationships, job interviews, and employment. If untreated, SM can have a lifelong impact.

The good news? With the right support, children with SM can gain confidence and expand their ability to communicate.

### How schools can help

Teachers and school staff play a vital role in supporting children with SM. Ideally, all staff working with these children should receive SM training and where possible a trained SM professional (typically a speech and language therapist, although this could be a CAMHS specialist or educational psychologist, for example).

### Creating a supportive environment

- Avoid putting children on the spot or pressuring them to speak
- Allow non-verbal communication, such as nodding, pointing, or writing to allow participation without pressure
- For class activities provide non-verbal options for all pupils, so the child with SM isn't singled out
- Pair the child with a patient, compassionate buddy to help them feel more comfortable and possibly act as a communication bridge
- Some people, including autistic individuals, may be unable to speak due to stressors in their environment, such as sensory overwhelm. For this reason, identifying and reducing sources of stress is paramount
- For older children, asking them what would help them to feel more comfortable is important. This could be done in non-verbal ways or via a parent if this would be easier for them

### Supporting gradual progress

- Having a trusted school-based adult that the child can build rapport with is key
- Start with small, manageable steps, that are achievable for the child

- The "sliding in technique" where a familiar person (usually a parent) plays with the child in a private room at school before slowly introducing others is an effective strategy for many children. This must be conducted correctly for it to be effective; room changes or staff entering the room can disrupt progress. Ideally, an SM trained professional would provide guidance
- Encourage peer support: the way classmates interact with a child with SM can make a huge difference. Encourage peers to not pressure the child or show any reaction should the child speak. My book 'Why doesn't Alice talk at school?\*' can help peers understand SM

### The role of families

Collaboration between schools and families is essential for effective support. Parents and caregivers can help by:

- Sharing insights on what strategies work at home and what situations cause the most anxiety for their child
- Supporting interventions like the sliding-in technique
- Using video or audio recordings—some children are able to record themselves speaking at home and gradually share these in school

Supporting a child with SM requires patience, understanding, and teamwork. By creating a low-pressure environment, encouraging gradual exposure, promoting peer support, and working with families, schools can help these children feel safe and confident. With the right strategies in place, children with SM can develop the confidence to communicate and thrive.



For free resources, including transition tips and an SM 'dos and don'ts' summary sheet

that can be distributed amongst all school staff, see: [www.confidentchildren.co.uk/freebies](http://www.confidentchildren.co.uk/freebies)

The book "A letter to my teacher – why I can't speak at school" can be shared with teachers to help them gain further insight on SM.

For further resources, see SMiRA [www.selectivemutism.org.uk](http://www.selectivemutism.org.uk)

Lucy Nathanson, selective mutism specialist & founder of [www.confidentchildren.co.uk](http://www.confidentchildren.co.uk)



## Schools Family Advice project

Citizens Advice Bridgend provide free, confidential and impartial advice on a range of areas that affect families including; debt, benefits, housing, employment and family issues.

Advice tailored to your situation.

Fortnightly advice sessions at

### Archbishop McGrath

Every other FRIDAY throughout term time.

To book an appointment call 01656 762800 and ask for a school appointment at Archbishop McGrath, or pop into school reception to ask for an appointment referral.

*A drop-in service will be delivered if appointment slots are available on the day - ask at school reception.*

## Citizens Advice helps people find a way forward.

We give free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems. We're a voice for people on the issues that matter to them.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

We're here for everyone.

01656 762800  
[citizensadvice.org.uk](http://citizensadvice.org.uk)



Citizens Advice is an operating name of The National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux.  
Registered charity number 279057.

# Schools Family Advice South Wales



## Aim of the Project

We know how hard it can be living well in today's society - rising bills, reduced income and many other factors pose a challenge to families on a regular basis.

We want to take some of that worry away by providing income maximisation, welfare benefits, energy, housing, and debt support to parents of children living in Bridgend.

45% of children say they worry about having enough to eat. The Wellbeing of Wales national indicator report states that "children are consistently the age group most likely to be in relative income poverty."

We will work together to put an end to children and families being driven into poverty or worrying about paying bills or buying food.

## Is this service for you?

### YES -

- If you have school aged children,
- If you worry about affording food, heating, rent / bills, uniforms, etc
- If you have debt
- If you are unsure where to turn for support

Any or all of the above can be explored in an advice session with us.

We can offer FREE advice and signposting to a range of support to help you and your family.

## How Citizens Advice can help

Our project will provide 1-2-1 advice sessions (of up to 1hr) for any parent / carer of a school age child within the school setting and provide practical support as well as signposting to other relevant agencies to make immediate and lasting improvements in their lives.

Each parent / carer will receive a full benefit check and income maximisation discussion based on their particular circumstances as well as access to emergency issue support such as food or fuel bank vouchers where applicable.

Individuals can also be referred into our specialist debt team at Citizens Advice if they require ongoing support for debt past the school-based session.



# CHRISTMAS CONCERT

*featuring*



***& THE 3½ TENORS***

in aid of

**Cancer Research UK ~ Maesteg**

**St Michael's Church, Maesteg**

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2025 ~ 7.00pm**

**Tickets ~ £7.00**

**Available from**

**Lisa Howells – 07721 369367**

**& Maesteg Branch of Cancer Research UK  
Fundraising Committee**