

22 November 2023

To: All consultees involved with the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda, in accordance with the School Organisation Code.

Dear Stakeholder,

Re.: The proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023 and the current pupils to transfer to a nearby alternative school, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, in accordance with parents' choice, from 1 January 2024.

At its meeting on 7 November 2023 Cyngor Gwynedd's Cabinet decided to approve the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, and to transfer the current pupils to an alternative school nearby, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, according to parents' choice, from 1 January 2024.

The proposal was developed as a result of the main challenges facing the school, namely:

- the number of learners at the school causing concern, with only 8 learners attending the school (September 2023)
- projected number of learners remain fragile,
- small class sizes – two classes with three learners in one and five in the other (January 2023).

In deciding on the proposal, the Cabinet considered the following factors in accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (11/2018):

- Quality and standards in education
- The need for places and the impact on school accessibility
- Education resources and other financial implications
- Other general factors
- Specific factors in the consideration of school closures
- The likely effect on different travel arrangements
- The likely impact on the Community
- The likely impact on the Welsh Language
- The likely impact on quality and standards in education
- Equality
- The requirements of the Well-being and Future Generations Act 2015

Swyddfa'r Cyngor
Caernarfon
Gwynedd LL55 1SH
01766 771000
www.gwynedd.gov.uk

Following a statutory objection period between 5 September - 4 October 2023 an objection report was presented to the Cabinet on 7 November 2023 ([Cabinet Report 7 November 2023 - Objection Report \(Item 6\)](#)). 4 objections to the proposal were received, and these objections are summarised together with the local authority's response in the objection report submitted to the Cabinet. This report along with other relevant documents is available at www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

Following consideration of the objection report, the Cabinet was satisfied that the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, and offer the current learners to transfer to an alternative nearby school, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, in accordance with parent's choice, from 1 January 2024 was the most appropriate response to the challenges the school is facing.

The reasons for confirming the proposal, with reference to the relevant factors set out in sections 1.3 to 1.7 of the School Organisation Code, are outlined below:

Quality and standards in education

- Implementing the proposal to close Ysgol Felinwnda would mean that the pupils are taught in more appropriately sized classes, offering more opportunities for learners to socialise and collaborate on a daily basis with their peers;
- Based on the result of the impact assessment on Quality and Standards in Education, and by comparing Estyn's reports, it is concluded that the standard of education provided at both nearby alternative schools is higher (Excellent), and at least equal to (Good), the standard of education at Ysgol Felinwnda (Good). As a result, it is anticipated that there would be a positive impact in terms of the quality and standards of education resulting from the implementation of the proposal.

Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools:

- The implementation of the proposal would lead to better consistency in class sizes and reduce the age range within the primary school classes in the area, with the learners being taught in schools where the numbers and projections are more robust and sustainable for the future.

Resourcing of education and other financial implications:

- Implementing the proposal would rationalise the cost per learner in schools and reduce the range in cost per learner for all Gwynedd learners;
- It is anticipated that implementing the proposal would lead to annual savings in revenue costs.

Other general factors:

- Implementing the proposal would mean that learners continue to be taught in a Welsh-medium school where the social use of the Welsh language is strong;
- The learners would continue to receive their education at a school within a reasonable distance of their homes and would receive transport in accordance with the County's Transport policy.

Specific factors in the consideration of school closures:

- Comments were received about the impact of closing the school on the community during the objection period. In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (011/2018), an assessment of the impact of the proposal on the community was conducted. Further consideration was given to the impact of the proposal on the community following consideration of the objections received, and it was concluded that some negative impact on the community is anticipated should the proposal to close the school be implemented. To mitigate the

impact on the community, opportunities were identified to ensure that the Llanwnda community is aware of the activity of the nearby alternative schools, and community collaboration between the neighbouring alternative schools and Ysgol Felinwnda community is encouraged, where appropriate.

- A number of other reasonable options were considered when developing the proposal, including clustering, collaboration, or federation with other schools. Nevertheless, the Education Department is of the opinion that none of these options would address the main challenges facing the school, namely:
 - The number of learners at the school causing concern, with only 8 learners attending the school (September 2023)
 - Projected number of learners remain fragile,
 - Small class sizes - two classes with three learners in one and five in the other (January 2023).

The report submitted to the Cabinet on **7 November 2023** elaborates on the background, and the statutory process including the objection period, as well as the above considerations. This report together with other relevant documents is available on www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/modernisingeducation

In accordance with the above decision, **Ysgol Felinwnda will close on 31 December 2023**, and the current pupils will transfer to a nearby alternative school, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, in accordance with parents' choice, from 1 January 2024.

In addition to the decision to close Ysgol Felinwnda on 31 December 2023, and the current pupils to transfer to a nearby alternative school, namely Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, in accordance with parents' choice, from 1 January 2024, the Cabinet approved:

- transport arrangements for the transitional period only, which would offer free transport to those learners who are currently registered at Ysgol Felinwnda, and live in Ysgol Felinwnda's catchment area, to Ysgol Bontnewydd or Ysgol Llandwrog, for the remainder the learner's period in one of those schools, in accordance with Cyngor Gwynedd's transport policy.
- allow a consultation to be held on the future of Ysgol Felinwnda's current catchment area in order to agree which school, or schools, will serve as a catchment area school for the children of Ysgol Felinwnda's current catchment area in the future.

The consultation will be held shortly in 2024. Following the consultation a report will be submitted to the Cabinet with a recommendation for a school/schools catchment area for the learners of Ysgol Felinwnda's current catchment area for the future.

If you need further information, please contact

Modernisingeducation@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Yours sincerely,



Dafydd Gibbard
Chief Executive
Cyngor Gwynedd