



Consultation
on the Proposed Amalgamation of
Ysgol Babanod Mochdre
and
Ysgol Cystennin
Mochdre, Conwy

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1. Description and Benefits of the Proposal

Through its Primary School Modernisation Programme Conwy County Borough Council has been reviewing current pupil numbers, equality of funding for pupils and the fitness for purpose of current school buildings across the Authority. The Local Authority is proposing the amalgamation of Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Cystennin. The proposed new school would remain located on the sites of the two current schools but would operate under one Board of Governors and one Management structure. The purpose of this consultation is to establish the views of the community, potential users and other important stakeholders.

The consultation is on the basis that, if agreed, the amalgamated school will open in September 2024. Proposals brought forward by the maintaining Local Authority will require the determination by the Executive of the Local Authority in all cases; meaning that if any formal objections that are received through the Statutory process they will be considered and determined by Conwy County Borough Council's Cabinet. Only a Local Authority objection will trigger the requirement for Welsh Ministers' approval where the Local Authority is not the proposer.

Those being consulted with are listed in the below table:

Name/Organisation
Parents, carers and guardians, teachers & staff of Ysgol Babanod Mochdre & Ysgol Cystennin
Governors of Ysgol Babanod Mochdre & Ysgol Cystennin
Headteacher & Governors of Ysgol Pen y Bryn, Ysgol Llandrillo yn Rhos and Ysgol Awel y Mynydd
Church in Wales Diocese of St Asaph & Roman Catholic Diocese of Wrexham
Denbighshire County Council Education Services
Gwynedd County Council Education Services
Welsh Minister for Education & Skills
Welsh Government Schools Management and Effectiveness Division
Assembly Member & Member of Parliament representing area subject to proposals
Local Conwy Councillor for Mochdre
Mochdre Community Council
Estyn
Teaching & Staff Trade Unions
GWE
Police & Crime Commissioner for North Wales
Conwy CYPP
Conwy Community First
Flying Start Conwy

The consultation will take place during the period from 19 June 2023 ending on the 7 August 2023 inclusive.

A report on the outcome of the consultation will be submitted to a meeting of the Council's Cabinet in September 2023.

We would like to know your views on this proposal and have suggested the ways in which you can do this at the end of this document.

1.1 The Proposal to Amalgamate the Two Existing Schools

The proposal is to formally amalgamate Ysgol Babanod Mochdre (Infants) and Ysgol Cystennin (Juniors).

The schools have been formally federalised since March 2017. This is a formal and legal arrangement by which the schools share certain governance arrangements and have a single governing body, under the leadership of the existing head teacher.

The Proposal to amalgamate Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Cystennin will mean the formal closure of both schools followed by the opening of a new school.

The proposed new school would remain located on two separate sites, under the leadership of one Head teacher and board of governors but with a unified management structure, mission statement, school values, logos, uniform, policies, and procedures.

Cabinet approved the recommendation to consult on this proposal 13th June 2023.

During the interim period officers from Education Services have been in liaising with the Headteacher and Governors of Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Cystennin and they have supported exploring this proposal.

The expected advantages and disadvantages of the Proposal to amalgamate Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Cystennin have been considered by Education Services and are identified in the table below.

Advantages / Benefits of the Proposal	Disadvantages / Challenges of the Proposal
Headteacher and Governors support this proposal in principle and have expressed an interest in amalgamation.	Staffing implications, potential staff redeployment and/or redundancies
Streamlined policies and structures with a single point of contact for parents/guardians/carers	Development of new day to day operational challenges of a new school i.e. school processes, new uniforms, new school name.
Continuity of education and curriculum for pupils, transferring from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2, reducing transitional dips in pupil performance.	
Reduced duplication and economies of scale in management of budgets	
Greater sense of school community for all staff, pupils, and parents	
Enhanced opportunities for staff professional development. To increase staff skills across both schools and to ensure that curriculum planning and resource sharing raising pupil standards and outcomes.	

Conwy Education Services have considered any potential risks associated with the proposal to amalgamate the two schools and one risk has been identified along with the action to be taken to mitigate the risk.

Risks Associated with Proposal	Action taken to Mitigate Risk
Proposal may not be supported and approved by Conwy County Borough Council's Cabinet	Continue to keep Cabinet members updated on the progress of the Proposal and the Strategic Primary School Modernisation Programme through democratic processes

By amalgamating Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Mochdre y Marian staff can work together creating stability and a shared vision to provide a consistent and coherent learning environment and offering greater potential for improving levels of achievement within the school.

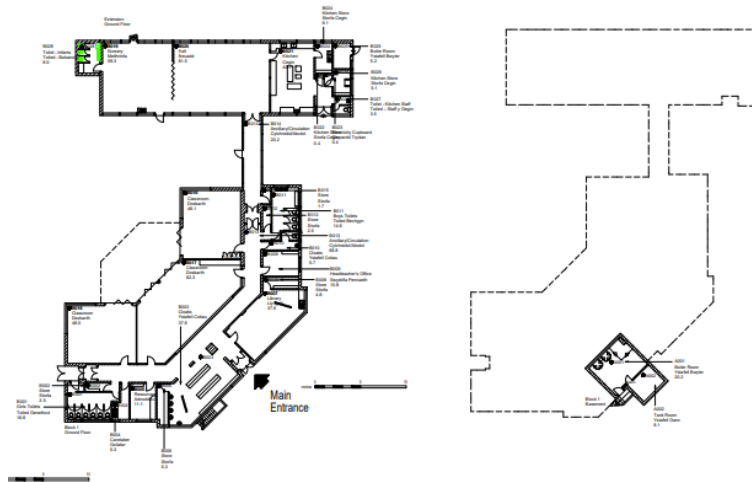
2. Details of the Affected Schools

2.1 Ysgol Babanod Mochdre

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre is a community infants school, located in the Village of Mochdre in the county of Conwy, serving mainly the Mochdre area. The school provides education for pupils between three and seven years old. English is the main language of the school.

The school has four classrooms (48.10m², 82.30m², 48.00m² and 59.30 m²) The pupils have access to 1144m² hard play area, 1186m² of soft play area and a habitat area of 284m².

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre - School Plan



Ysgol Babanod Mochdre's has the capacity to accommodate 81 pupils between the ages of three to seven years old and 26 nursery spaces.

Pupil numbers for the last 5 years

January 2019	35
January 2020	30
January 2021	30
January 2022	44
January 2023	44

Projected pupil numbers over the next five years are expected to be:

(Taken from January 2023 PLASC stats)

January 2024	40
January 2025	38
January 2026	40
January 2027	39
January 2028	39

As of January 2023 there were 44 full time children attending the school with 14 part time pupils attending the Nursery class. (Reception = 11 pupils, Year 1 = 15 pupils, Year 2 = 18 pupils).

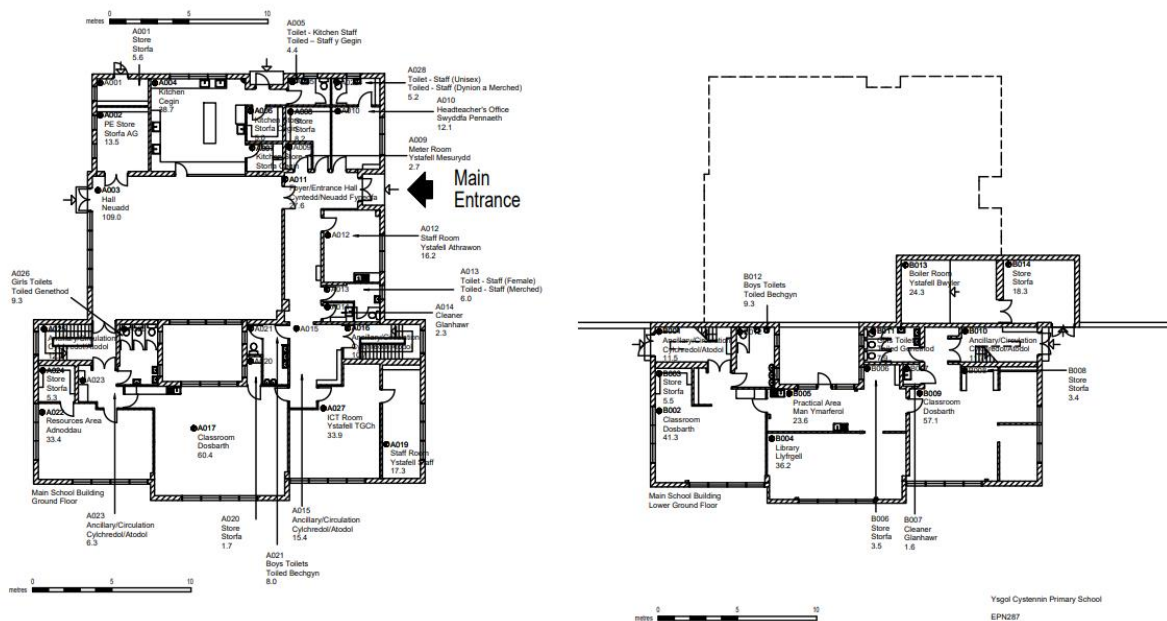
2.2 Ysgol Cystennin

Ysgol Cystennin is a community school for pupils aged seven to eleven. It is situated on the outskirts of Mochdre, in the County Borough of Conwy. Nearly all pupils who attend the school are from the local area, where there are significant levels of social and economic disadvantage.

The school has three classrooms (60.40m², 41.30m² and 57.1m²). There is also an ICT room (33.9m²).

The pupils have access to 5120m² of sports pitches, 1293m² of hard play zone, a soft play area of 2810m² and a habitat area of 616m²

Ysgol Cystennin - School Plan



Ysgol Cystennin has the capacity to accommodate 82 pupils between the ages of seven to eleven years old.

Pupil numbers for the last 5 years

January 2019	80
January 2020	85
January 2021	75
January 2022	64
January 2023	65

Projected pupil numbers over the next five years are expected to be:

(taken from January 2023 PLASC stats)

January 2024	61
January 2025	57
January 2026	55
January 2027	58
January 2028	53

As of January 2023 there were 65 full time children attending the school (Year 3 = 11 pupils, Year 4=13 pupils, Year 5 = 19 pupils, Year 6 = 22 pupils).

2.3 Effect on Staff

If amalgamated, the two schools the Temporary Governing Body will work with the Headteacher and in liaison with Education Human Resources officers in establishing the staffing structure for the new school. These proposals will provide a greater opportunity for staff development of skills over the whole primary age curriculum and potential for more specialist staffing and management structures in the all-through school.

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre

There is a full time Headteacher and 2 part-time Teachers at the school. There are 3 teaching assistants (2 part-time and 1 full-time) and 1 HLTA that provide support to teaching staff. The school has a Caretaker/Cleaner, 2 breakfast club assistants, and a midday supervisor.

Ysgol Cystennin

At Ysgol Cystennin there are 3 full time Teachers, which includes an Assistant Head. Support to teaching staff is provided by 3 Teaching Assistants (2 full-time and 1 part-time). There are also 1 Breakfast Club Assistant and 2 Midday Supervisor Assistant.

The following staff works across **both** sites:

- 1 full-time Headteacher,
- 1 part-time Additional Learning Co-ordinator and
- 1 full-time Administrative Assistant.

2.4 Admissions Arrangements

Admissions arrangements for the new amalgamated school will continue to be administered by Conwy Education Services.

Teaching groups will remain within the statutory limit of 30 pupils in the Infant classes and 30 or less for junior pupils.

2.5 Catchment Area

In the event of the proposed amalgamation of Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Cystennin there will be no changes to the existing catchment area for the school. The new school will have the same catchment area that currently covers both the separate infants and junior schools.

Pupils will eventually transfer to the relevant Secondary Schools of Ysgol Eirias or Ysgol Y Creuddyn.

3. Quality & Standards in Education

3.1 Curriculum

The ESTYN inspection reports for both schools comments as follows on the curriculum provision:

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre *“Teachers generally plan an engaging, broad and balanced curriculum linked to topics that the pupils enjoy. These meet the requirements of the Foundation Phase framework successfully. The school uses the local community particularly well to provide rich and purposeful learning experiences”.*

Ysgol Cystennin – *“Teachers plan a rolling programme of topics that includes many interesting activities and events that meet the needs of most learners and deliver the requirements of the National Curriculum successfully. Plans make suitable reference to the National Literacy and Numeracy Framework. Teachers have a good understanding of how to develop pupils’ skills in literacy and numeracy as they move through the school”.*

Amalgamation would build upon the work that the headteacher, staff and governing bodies have already started in order to improve school standards further. This good work could be more easily built upon; collaboration providing the following potential benefits for pupils standards, enhanced provision, leadership and management:

- creating a shared educational ethos that supports children from age 3 through to 11
- having both schools phases (Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2) working together with ease to track the children’s progress from age 3 to 11
- enabling pupils and staff from both Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 to access specialisms, resources and facilities associated with either phases more easily
- accommodating a wider breadth of activities
- addressing potential ‘dips’ in learning that can be associated with transitions and transfers from school to school
- having consistent pastoral care from age 3 to 11
- allowing the community to identify with and support a single primary school and potentially providing a more effective community focus role through its single governance
- promoting greater interaction allowing opportunities for additional activities which could be supported by parents, children and staff
- reduced duplication and economies of scale in management of budgets
- providing greater opportunities for staff development and learning from new ways of doing things.

3.2 Estyn Inspections

Schools are inspected as part of a national programme of school inspection. The purpose of inspection is to identify good features and shortcomings in schools in order that they may improve the quality of education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils (ESTYN).

As a result of changes made by Estyn to the inspection criteria schools are evaluated by asking three key questions and awarding judgement based on a four point scale as follows:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement.
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths.

The judgement of the ESTYN inspection teams for the schools is as follows:

3.2.1 Ysgol Babanod Mochdre: May 2017

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6622106>

Key Questions	Judgement
1 How good are the outcomes?	Adequate
2 How good is provision?	Adequate
3 How good are leadership and management?	Adequate

An ESTYN review followed in November 2018 and judged that the school made sufficient progress in addressing the recommendations from the Section 28 inspection. The school was removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn review.

3.2.2 Ysgol Cystennin : January 2015

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/provider/6622269>

Key Questions	Judgement
1 How good are the outcomes?	Good
2 How good is provision?	Good
3 How good are leadership and management?	Good

The proposed amalgamation of the two schools is expected to provide an opportunity for further improvement under one Governing Body with a single ethos and policies.

4. Finance

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Cystennin will be funded on the same formula as other schools if they are part of an amalgamation. As part of the Council's funding formula, schools are funded on the number of pupils and on other non-teaching costs. If the schools were to be merged to become a single school, the formula would calculate a single budget which would be smaller than the budget of operating as two separate schools.

The new school would in the first year, receive additional funding of 50% of the difference between the funding of the new school and the original two schools and in the second year receive additional funding of 25% of the difference between the funding of the new school and the original two schools. In subsequent years, there would be no additional funding and the new school would be funded as one school.

The revenue costs for running Ysgol Babanod Mochdre during the 2022/23 financial year were **£277,000** with the cost per pupil figure of **£5,380**.

For Ysgol Cystennin the revenue costs for running the school during the 2022/23 financial year were **£366,000** with the cost per pupil figure of **£4,753**.

One of the drivers for amalgamation is equality of funding for pupils and through the amalgamation of infants and junior schools the cost per pupil figure for the Mochdre Area will be rationalised.

The average cost per pupil in Conwy is **£4,215**.

5. Condition of School Buildings

Conwy County Borough Council as part of their Asset Management data hold information in relation to the condition of all school buildings (Whole Life Works). They are scored by the following:

A	Serviceable, maintained life with normal maintenance
B	Operational, with minor essential maintenance requirements
C	Operational but with some critical and/or essential maintenance requirement
D	Barely operational, major critical and essential maintenance requirement a risk of breakdown; due for extensive refurbishment or replacement

The scores for each school are detailed below:

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre	Ysgol Cystennin
C	B

6. Community Impact

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Cystennin

In an amalgamation, the schools remain open in their communities, but they also retain their own individuality.

6.1. Community use of school facilities

Once a month, the Community Council use the school hall at Ysgol Babanod Mochdre for their meetings. This is a temporary arrangement until they find a new venue.

6.2. Out of School Childcare

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre have a playgroup running between the hours of 12:30pm and 3:00pm every day (during term time only).

7. Transport Impact

The current Home to School Transport Policy states that free transport will be provided for Primary School pupils who reside over 2 miles from their nearest appropriate school.

There are currently four pupils receiving Home to School Transport to either Ysgol Babanod Mochdre or Ysgol Cystennin that live over 2 miles from the school.

Should the Proposal to amalgamate the schools be approved, there will be no changes to the current transport provision. Pupils will continue to receive their education from the same site as they currently do and therefore will not be eligible for free Home to School Transport.

8. Language Impact

The Welsh Government recommends that an analysis of the use of the Welsh Language in the schools referred to in this document is provided.

As the table below demonstrates both Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Cystennin are English medium schools where all pupils are taught through the medium of English, with less than 25% of the teaching curriculum through the medium of Welsh. Both schools have a mainly English ethos with staff and Governor meetings and pupils informal activities taking place through the medium of English.

The ESTYN reports for both the schools comments on how Welsh is utilised within the curriculum and in the school as a whole.

Ysgol Babanod Mochdre – *“The school develops pupils’ Welsh language skills well. All staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to hear and to respond to spoken Welsh throughout the day. They have recently introduced simple books to support reading in Welsh and there are regular opportunities for pupils to write. However, the provision for learning about Welsh heritage and culture is less well developed.”*

Ysgol Cystennin – *“By the end of key stage 2, most pupils make suitable progress in developing their speaking skills in Welsh. They understand the Welsh used by staff well and respond confidently to familiar language patterns. However, pupils’ reading and writing skills in Welsh across the school are generally underdeveloped.”*

The proposal to formally amalgamate will not impact negatively on the use of the Welsh Language, by having one Governing Body there may be opportunity to work towards improving how the Welsh Language is promoted and expanded through the curriculum and in more informal activities with continued support from the Local Authority.

Analysis of the use of Welsh Language	Ysgol Babanod Mochdre	Ysgol Cystennin
Pupil Numbers – Full and Part Time (as of January 2023)	58 (inc 14N)	65
Language category of the school	English Medium	English Medium
(PLASC 2023) Percentage of pupils from homes where the language spoken is:		
<i>Does not speak Welsh at Home</i>	3%	12%
<i>Speaks Welsh at Home</i>	3%	6%
<i>Not applicable, cannot speak Welsh</i>	93%	82%
Percentage <u>taught</u> through the medium of Welsh	0%	0%
Pupils language medium in the		
<i>Playground</i>	English	English
<i>Breakfast Club</i>	English	English
<i>After-school club</i>	English	English
School participates annually in:		
<i>Cylch Meithrin / Ti a Fi</i>	No	No
<i>Eisteddfodau</i>	No	No
<i>Urdd Branches</i>	No	No
<i>Other Welsh Medium activities</i>	No	No
The school is used by the community to learn Welsh	No	No

Percentage of Teaching staff able to teach through the medium of Welsh:	67%	33%
Percentage of Support Staff that are able to teach through the medium of Welsh:	17%	0%
Percentage of Governors that are able to speak Welsh:	0%	0%
Language most commonly used during: <i>Governor meetings –</i> <i>PTA meetings</i> <i>Staff meetings</i>	English English English	English English English
(of persons aged 3+) The percentage of the Local Ward that as at census date 2011: <i>Speak Welsh</i>	Mochdre 22.5%	Mochdre 22.5%
<i>No skills in Welsh</i>	65.3%	65.3%

9. Equality Impact

The below tables consider the existing information of the schools in relation to any specific equality strands that may need to be considered during the implementation of the proposals. The information for the schools shows a diverse school population and there is no indication that any pupils would be disadvantaged should the proposal go ahead; given that they will both remain on the same site and pupils will have little change in their daily school routine.

Equality Strand	Ysgol Babanod Mochdre
Race	<p>(PLASC 2023) In Ysgol Babanod Mochdre 91% of its pupils who are over 5 years old are 'White British'. and the remaining 9% were 'Chinese', 'Turkish/Turkish Cypriot' and 'Iraqi'.</p> <p>The PLASC 2023 data tells us that 50% of pupils are 'British' 38% 'Welsh', 7% are 'Other' and 5% are English.</p> <p>Information in relation to race is regarded as 'sensitive data' and as such, the information for pupils under the age of 5 is withheld.</p>
Disability	<p>(PLASC 2023) There are currently around 14% of pupils at Ysgol Babanod Mochdre who receive some support for Additional Learning Needs, of these, the majority are boys.</p>
Gender	<p>(PLASC 2023) Of the 44 pupils who currently attend school full time at Ysgol Babanod Mochdre there are 23 boys and 21 girls.</p>
Age	<p>Ysgol Babanod Mochdre is an infant's school providing full time education for pupils aged 4-7 and part time nursery for pupils aged 3-4 years old.</p> <p>Information classed as 'sensitive' e.g. ethnicity, nationality, is not reported for children under 5 years of age, in line with National recommendations.</p>
Religion & Belief	<p>(PLASC 2023) Ysgol Babanod Mochdre is not an affiliated denominational school, which is reflected in the breakdown of pupil's religious beliefs. At Ysgol Babanod Mochdre 76% of pupils are recorded as having 'No Religion' and 17% 'Christian'. The remaining 7% consist of 'Muslim', 'Other' and 'Unclassified'.</p>
Sexual Orientation	N/A
Welsh Language	See 'Language Analysis' for Ysgol Babanod Mochdre (Section 8)
Other (please state)	<p>(PLASC 2023) 41% of pupils that attend Ysgol Babanod Mochdre are currently eligible for free school meals.</p>

Equality Strand	Ysgol Cystennin
Race	<p>(PLASC 2023) In Ysgol Cystennin 85% of its pupils are 'White British', and the remaining 15% were 'Filipino', 'Chinese', 'Hong Kong Chinese', 'White & Asian', 'Turkish/Turkish Cypriot', 'Romanian' and 'Polish'.</p> <p>The PLASC 2023 data tells us that 60% of pupils are 'British' 25% 'Welsh', 9% are English and 6% are 'Other'.</p>
Disability	<p>(PLASC 2023) There are currently around 23% of pupils who receive some support for Additional Learning Needs; of those pupils who receive support at Ysgol Cystennin 66% are Boys and 33% are Girls.</p>
Gender	<p>(PLASC 2023) Of the 65 pupils who currently attend Ysgol Cystennin there are 31 Boys and 34 Girls.</p>
Age	<p>Ysgol Cystennin is a junior school providing education for pupils aged 7 to 11. Provided by the 2023 PLASC data 11 pupils in Year 3, 12 pupils in Year 4, 18 pupils in Year 5 and 22 pupils in Year 6.</p>
Religion & Belief	<p>(PLASC 2023) Ysgol Cystennin is not an affiliated denominational school, which is reflected in the breakdown of pupil's religious beliefs. At Ysgol Cystennin 73% of pupils are recorded as having 'No Religion' and 15% 'Christian'. The remaining 12% consist of 'Muslim', 'Baptist' and 'Roman Catholic.'</p>
Sexual Orientation	N/A
Welsh Language	See 'Language Analysis' for Ysgol Cystennin (Section 8)
Other (please state)	<p>(PLASC 2023) There are around 45% of pupils who attend Ysgol Cystennin that are currently eligible for free school meals.</p>

10. Consultation

This document marks the start of the consultation. This enables all interested parties to give their views on the proposal before any statutory notices are published. This period of consultation will last until the **7th of August 2023**. As a result of the consultation the Council may decide not to proceed any further with the proposal or to go ahead with the proposal or a modified version of it. Any formal proposal would be set out and published in the form of a public statutory notice.

The Council has the powers to propose expansions or closures of schools. If proposals are published following this period of consultation, there then follows a statutory 28-day period during which further representations and formal objections can be made.

Any responses during the Consultation will not be regarded as formal objections. To have responses considered as statutory objections they must be made in writing or by email within the 28-day objection period.

Whether or not objections are received within the statutory period, the proposal will be determined by the Authority at the end of the 28-day objection period. Conwy Cabinet is expected to determine this publication in September 2023.

How can you comment or ask questions on the proposal?

- By filling in the attached questionnaire and sending it to Dr Lowri Brown, Head of Education, Education Services, Coed Pella, Colwyn Bay, LL29 7AZ.
- By writing to Dr Lowri Brown, Head of Education, Education Services, Coed Pella, Colwyn Bay, LL29 7AZ.
- By e-mailing your views to School.Modernisation@conwy.gov.uk.

**Proposal for the Amalgamation of
Ysgol Babanod Mochdre
and
Ysgol Cystennin**

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN 7th AUGUST 2023

To: Dr Lowri Brown, Head of Education Services, Coed Pella, Colwyn Bay, LL29 7AZ.

Online: www.conwy.gov.uk/MochdreSchoolsConsultation

You can also email your views to: School.Modernisation@conwy.gov.uk

Do you agree with the proposal to amalgamate Ysgol Babanod Mochdre and Ysgol Cystennin?

Yes

No

I am: -

The parent of a child currently at one of the above schools

The parent of a child previously at the school

The parent of a child at another school

A member of staff at the school

A member of staff at another school

A governor of the school

A governor of another school

Other interested party

Name of other school or interested party

My comments are as follows:

Do you wish to receive notification via email link of the Consultation Report once published on Conwy County Borough Council Education Services webpage?

Yes

No

If 'Yes' please provide email address: _____

Data Protection: Conwy County Borough Council is the data controller for the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulations 2016/Data Protection Act 2018. Conwy County Borough Council will manage the information you provide in a manner that complies with the Data Protection Regulation General Data 2016 / Data Protection Act 2018. The information you provide will only be used to provide you with feedback on the above. In order to see the privacy notice and more visit <https://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Council/Access-to-Information/Privacy-Notices/How-Conwy-County-Borough-Council-uses-your-Information.aspx>