

GELLISWICK CHURCH IN WALES VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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3rd September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that you have been able to enjoy a restful break with your families over the summer holiday. We have been excited to welcome your child back to school today, and I invite you to join me in giving a very warm welcome to all our new pupils and families.

Welcome • Croeso • أهلاً وسهلاً • Добре дошъл • Dobrodošao • Vítejte • Maligayang pagdating •
Selamat datang • Laipni lūdzam • Mile widziany • Bun venit • Добро пожаловать • Soo dhawoow • ต้อนรับ
• Hoş geldin • Прошу • ಸ್ವಾಗತ ಓ • hoş geldin • I ni sene

For those of you who do not already know me, this week I take up my new post as Headteacher of Gelliswick, having led at the school for the past 4 years, as both Deputy and Acting Headteacher and having most recently been seconded as Acting Executive Headteacher of two Pembrokeshire Primary Schools. I feel extremely privileged to continue to build upon the successes of Gelliswick School, with our children, you, their families, staff, governors and our community of Hakin and Hubberston.

I have taught for 17 years in Pembrokeshire's largest primary schools and, as a parent of three children, believe that it is so important that each child in our school is happy, known, supported to overcome any barriers and achieve their potential. I want all the children of Gelliswick to have a strong voice in our school, where they can drive improvements and lead their learning. I believe that our children deserve the best – where they are learning through active, creative, exciting and meaningful learning experiences, which build their enthusiasm for learning and help them develop strong values that will support them through life. I want Gelliswick to be a safe place for every member of our school community, where our learners thrive academically, socially, emotionally and spirituality – finding and developing their unique skills and talents.

Of course, none of this will be possible without your support. As key educators in your children's lives, it is important that you have a voice and that as a school we are approachable and make time to listen to any of your concerns, worries or thoughts about your child and our school. Gelliswick will continue to operate an open-door policy, meaning that you can come to school to speak with a member of our team about any urgent issue. We plan to establish a termly informal parent coffee morning, where you will have the opportunity to meet other parents, chat to me and other members of staff over a cup of tea/coffee; helping us to understand what we are doing well and how we might improve things at Gelliswick. Watch this space!

You can be assured that I will strive, with our wonderful staff team, to create the best education for your child/children whilst they are members of our school family. That starts with our whole school learning focus on the big question of 'What makes a hero?' this Autumn term.

If we haven't already met, do come up and introduce yourselves outside school – I will attempt to be at the gate before and after school each day.

Important information about our school

Getting to know us

You may be new to Gelliswick School or perhaps have not yet met all of our large staff team. Over the coming days, we hope you will get to know your child's class teachers and support staff. Our senior leadership team and family support staff try to be out on the playground daily during drop-off and pick-up. If you haven't yet put a face to a name, we've included some pictures at the bottom of this letter. Please do pop in to chat with us should you require any assistance, information or support. We have an open-door policy, meaning that someone should always be available to speak with you to discuss any questions, queries or concerns.



Ensuring we know you and your child

It is essential that we hold the most up to date information on you and your child so that we can keep your child safe. **If any of the information you have previously provided us with has changed**, and you have not already informed us, please contact the office as soon as possible with your new details. Please consider whether any of the following information has changed over the past year.

- Present Address
- Name and address and phone number of anyone with parental responsibility who does not live with your child
- Details (name, address, telephone number and relationship to the child) of up to four other people that we can contact in the event that we cannot make contact with you or anyone else with parental responsibility
- Name, relationship to child and telephone number of adults who have permission to collect your child
- Medical information including any current medical conditions or dietary needs we should be aware of
- Any other changes you believe we should be aware of
- Local Educational Visits that involve walks to and from local destinations, or bus journeys to venues in nearby towns and destinations such as Milford and Haverfordwest.

You can contact the school office any time there are changes, but be aware we may ask you to provide the information in writing via email or Class Dojo. Please note you can find our [privacy notice](#) on our website.

Staying in touch



ClassDojo

Communication between home and school is vitally important to ensure your child can thrive at school. You can contact your child's class teacher directly through the class dojo app, which can be downloaded for free onto your smartphone (app store) or accessed through their website. Please let your child's class teacher or

the school office know that you would like to connect to your child's class and an invitation will be sent to you directly. Please be aware that teachers may not respond to messages after 4pm and will not routinely check for messages throughout the school day, as they are teaching. If you need an urgent response or would like to arrange an appointment with your child's class teacher, please contact the school office. Class Dojo's new calendar feature gives regular notifications in the run up to school events, so please ensure that your notifications are enabled to avoid missing anything important. Whole school correspondence and notifications will also come through this app on the 'School Story'; if you are not receiving 'School Story' notifications, please contact Mrs Emma Evans via the school office.

Safe and active travel to school

We encourage you and your child to choose an active route to school, where possible and practicable. Please read our [safe travel guidance](#) (available on our website) and ensure that, if you are travelling by car, you are parking legally and considerately.



Drop-off and pick-up

You can access the school site when gates are open through the under-croft (Gelliswick Road), MUGA entrance (lane alongside football club) and rear gate (from rugby club car park). Gates open between 8.40am - 8.50am for drop off, and 3.20-3.30pm for pickup.

It is important that we know how your child is getting home from school:

- We expect children from Nursery to year 2 to be dropped off and collected from the classroom door by a responsible adult.
- In year 3 we expect children to be dropped off and collected either from the playground or from outside the school gate by a responsible adult.
- In years 4, 5 and 6, we ask parents to provide written permission for your child to be allowed to walk to and from school without adult supervision. Please contact your child's class teacher on Class Dojo to give your permission for them to walk home without adult supervision.

School session times are as follows:

Year groups	Mon-Thurs	Friday
Reception - Year 6	8.50am-3.25pm	8.50am-12.15pm
PT Nursery – AM	8.50am-11.25am	8.50am-11.25am
PT Nursery – PM	12.20pm-3.20pm	

We politely remind parents that it is your responsibility to supervise your child when on the playground during drop-off and pick-up, including when they may be using the playground equipment which we know many of them enjoy.

Snack



As part of the healthy school agenda, we encourage all pupils to eat a healthy snack of fruit at break time. Fruit is provided at school daily at a charge of £1.50 per week, or £10 for this half-term. Please use [ParentPay](#) where possible, or pop into the office to pay by card or by cash (in a clearly marked envelope).

School Meals – Now Free for ALL Full-time Learners

All full-time learners are now entitled to receive a free school lunch every school day, potentially saving over £15 per week per child, through the Universal Primary Free School Meals policy that is part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru. Parents do **not** need to register or complete an application. Pupils will order all school meals as usual during morning registration.



IMPORTANT: Parents who previously qualified for free school meals will still need to complete the existing 'free school meals' application as **this means you can continue to receive other financial support** for a range of school costs such as residential visits, clothing, equipment, sports kit, stationary. So, if your child is starting school or your circumstances have changed and you are receiving one of the following benefits, you should apply at [Free school meals – Primary - Pembrokeshire County Council](#). Families in receipt of the following support will be eligible:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA). Contribution Based Jobseekers Allowance (CBJSA) does not qualify
- Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credits only, with an annual household Income of under £16,190*
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Income Related Employment and Support Allowance (IR)

**Please note that if you are in receipt of Working Tax Credits in addition to any of these benefits you will not be eligible for free meals, even if your household income is below £16,190.*

Please contact Mrs Evans, our Community Focused Schools Manager who can support you in applying.

School Uniform

We strongly encourage all learners to wear school uniform daily. We believe that this supports their readiness for learning and builds a sense of pride and belonging to our school.

Following feedback on how hard it is to keep the white polo shirts of our active and adventurous learners clean, we have introduced a [royal blue polo shirt](#) to our school uniform this year!

Our uniform consists of a royal blue jumper/cardigan with royal blue/white polo shirt and dark trousers, shorts or skirt. There is no need to purchase uniform with our school logo, and many local retailers sell affordable items without the school logo. Should you wish to purchase uniform with a logo, these are available to order online at Tees-R-Us, or at Granby's, Charles Street Milford Haven. We also have lots of pre-loved uniform in excellent condition stocked at school in our Lighthouse hub, which you can access for free by contacting Mrs Evans or Mrs Awcock at the school office. If you have uniform that your child has outgrown and it is in great condition, please consider donating it at our main office.



The Lighthouse Hub

Tucked away, just inside our main entrance is our fantastic Lighthouse Hub. Our pupils know it well, and often pop down to help themselves to anything they need; a swimming costume, a coat, bag, new hairbrush, shorts, new tights, sanitary items, or a school jumper. Our Lighthouse is available to any member of our school community and we have been able to support many families in providing beds and mattresses, bedding, emergency fuel vouchers, nappies, wipes, toiletries and even Christmas presents!

Our Lighthouse is there to facilitate both the giving and receiving of support for our whole school community and saving the environment through the passing on of pre-loved items. If you would like to give to the Lighthouse and have items of clothing, coats, wellies or shoes that are in great, clean condition and your child has outgrown them, please consider donating them to the Lighthouse. If you are in need, please pop into the main entrance and ask for Mrs Evans or Mrs Awcock or send them a Dojo message to arrange a visit.

The Lighthouse has grown rapidly over the past few years, supported by generous donors and we are delighted to be working with Rev. Samuel to create a Lighthouse satellite Hub at the Church of the Holy Spirit in the coming months.

We are always looking for volunteers who can give an hour or so of their time to sort through and organise the donations that we receive. Please talk to a member of our leadership team if you are interested in volunteering.

In the run up to Christmas, we will be facilitating a free Lighthouse Christmas Toy Swap! if you have toys or games in excellent condition that your child or children have outgrown or a having a pre-Christmas clear-out, keep us in mind! On November 27th-28th you will be able to drop-off donated toys and games. There will be an adult only toy collection day (29th Nov), both during the school day and afterschool, by appointment, to ensure that parents can visit discreetly, without prying eyes of excited children!

Attendance



Being in school every day is essential to ensure that learners make the most possible progress, develop friendships and make important memories. When your child walks into school every morning, you can be assured they will be supported personally, emotionally and academically. We're here to provide them with the social and educational development opportunities to shape their futures and become the best versions of themselves. We strive for a target of 95% across the school, so please contact Mrs Hadley if you or your child needs any support with attendance or have any questions.

Improving pupils' attendance will see a huge drive this year with further information to follow next week.

School Improvement Priorities 2024-25

We are always striving to improve our school and so we set priorities each year to drive forward these improvements. We identify these areas of improvement from a range of information, including parent and pupil feedback, observations of teaching, analysis of pupil performance and progress data and looking at evidence of learning e.g. pupil workbooks. Please see below the focus areas for improvement this year:

Gelliswick School Improvement Priorities 2024-25	
1	Improve attainment in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, closing the gap between eFSM and non-eFSM progress and attainment
2	Improve the quality of teaching and learning
3	Improve standards of Welsh second language
4	Develop the religious identity and life of the school
5	Improve learner attendance, closing the gap between eFSM and non-eFSM attendance

We will be sharing with you information about attendance and pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and asking for your support with them throughout the year.

Wrap around care

As we seek to support working families with the cost of living, we offer wrap around care at the start and end of the school day, with a slightly earlier breakfast club entry and a regular after-school provision. Please note that costs have increased slightly this term.

Breakfast wrap around (last entry at 8.30 a.m.)	After school wrap around
Monday-Friday: 7.45am entry – 50p Monday-Friday: 8am entry – Free	Monday-Thursday: 3.25pm - 4pm – £2.50 Monday-Thursday: 3.25pm - 4.30pm – £4.00

- Please book in advance using [ParentPay](#). You can choose your days a week in advance, by the end of the day on Thursday of the previous week.
- Please note that our breakfast provision means that all learners are able to receive free toast in class as they register in the morning.
- For free after school provision on a Friday between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. please email: admin2.gelliswick@pembrokeshire.gov.uk or contact our school office to book a space for your child.

Extra-curricular clubs and dates for your diary

Please keep a look out for our extra-curricular clubs offer which you can expect to receive next week. Please find attached our family calendar for 2024-25, which contains important dates for your diary. All dates on the calendar are subject to change. We will endeavour to provide you with as much notice of changes as possible.

Family volunteers

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers at Gelliswick School. Whether it be listening to readers, accompanying a school trip or popping in each week to support with organising our Lighthouse Hub. If you or a relative would like to give some of their time to support the learners of Gelliswick School, please speak with a member of our leadership team, or make a call to the school office. We can promise you a warm Gelliswick welcome and lots of fun with our brilliant children!

If you have any questions or require any support, please do not hesitate to contact the school office. We look forward to another great year working with you to support our wonderful Gelliswick children!

Cofion cynnes,

Mrs Leanne Prevel
Head teacher

Get to know some of our team beyond you child's class

 Mrs Prevel Headteacher	 Mrs Reynolds Acting Deputy Headteacher	 Mrs Davies ALNCO/Senior Leader	 Mrs Mountstevens Senior Leader	 Miss Ralph Senior Leader Y5/6 Lead
 Mrs Vaughan Early Years Lead	 Mrs Brock Y1/2 Lead	 Mr Stow Y3/4 Lead	 Ms Evans Community School Manager	 Mrs Ashworth Business Manager
 Mrs Awcock Family Support Officer	 Mrs Hadley Attendance/ Admin Support	 Mrs Davies Admin Support	 Mrs Summons Admin Support	