

GELLISWICK CHURCH IN WALES VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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25th October 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Supporting Pupil Attendance

Our first half-term of this academic year has already flown by! Our children have worked so hard and are well deserving a week of rest over the half-term break. We have had lots of exciting learning this term and look forward to returning to school on Monday 4th November. As we look back over the term since September, I would like to draw your attention to your child's attendance (which has been sent home today), and to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of our children and their families regarding school attendance.

Our school attendance target this year has been set at 96%, based on some important findings. Research indicates that students with attendance rates below 96% tend to achieve lower levels of attainment compared to their peers with higher attendance. Specifically, students with attendance rates below 90% are at a higher risk of seeing a drop in their GCSE grades. For example, missing just 17 days of school (which equates to about 90% attendance) can result in a student dropping an entire grade in their GCSEs.

We understand that this year will have already been challenging for some families, especially those who have dealt with illness and perhaps a recent bout of chicken pox. Your child's well-being is our top priority, and we appreciate your efforts to keep us informed and to support your child's education during these difficult times. For those families whose children have had frequent absences, particularly unauthorised absences, you will likely already have received contact from the school or can expect contact regarding this soon. Unfortunately, the school has already needed to contact the local authority to issue a number of fixed penalty notices to parents of pupils whose attendance has caused high levels of concern. We understand that there can be various reasons for absences and that these are sometime unavoidable, but it is essential to recognise the impact that missing school can have on your child's learning and development. Regular attendance helps pupils keep up with their learning, personal and social, participate in class activities, develop relationships, lifelong friendships, and build a strong foundation for their future. We encourage you to work with us to improve your child's attendance.

Our new pupil attendance champions will be working with the school's senior leadership team to consider how we can support and encourage children and families to maximise their attendance at school, with rewards for learners achieving the school attendance target, as well as those considerably improving their attendance. We congratulate all our families whose children are already reaching our 96% attendance target and those whose attendance is improving.

Our school is here to support you and your child. If you need assistance or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Please contact the school to speak with Ms. Emma Evans, Mrs. Tracey Awcock, or Mrs. Jaclyn Hadley if you need any support.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I trust that we will continue to work together to make the rest of the school year a success for all our children. I wish you all a restful break with your loved ones over this half-term holiday.

Yours sincerely,

Leanne Prevel, Headteacher