



September 2018

Pennaeth Mr M Vickery Headteacher

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back to the start of a new academic year, which I am pleased to say, has got off to an excellent start. I would also like to say a special welcome to all our new parents and students who have joined us.

We have begun the year celebrating the success of the outgoing year 11 students. We are pleased with the performance of all the Year 11 students. It is good to see the results confirm the continuing progress of the school. We are so pleased that our students have performed well and have secured the results they need for the next stage of their lives.

These results are testimony to the incredible hard work and dedication of the parents, staff and students at the school. Everyone has worked tirelessly to achieve such success and is to be congratulated. I am very proud of what has been achieved and know that the students thoroughly deserve these excellent results. It is pleasing to see that the major curriculum changes nationally have not impacted on the students and staff's commitment to success. I am looking forward to the continued progress over future years.

Learning Plans and feedback

Recent educational research shows students learn best when they are actively part of the learning process, not just passive participants. In other words, they should know just as much as their teachers about how they are learning and what they need to do next.

To this end, we have refined the methods we use to give our students feedback on their work. A summary of what you might notice when you look through your child's work is provided in this letter. Taken together, these modifications mean that your child should always know the answers to these two questions:

**What am I doing well in this subject?
What do I need to do to improve my work in this subject?**

Students will be regularly asked these questions in school, so it would be beneficial for your child if you were to ask these questions at home as well. This will reinforce their understanding and help them make progress more quickly.

Of course we know it can sometimes be quite difficult to get detailed answers out of children. If you are used to asking, 'What did you do at school today?' and getting a one word response, it is hoped that these more specific questions will provide you with the information you really want.

In addition you will see Learning Plans appearing in your child's books. These are a list of the learning outcomes for each half term, with detail of how your child knows they have been successful in their learning and progress. However, if you are concerned your child genuinely does not know how they are doing in any of their subjects, please contact their Head of Year.

School Attendance

We have also had the best start to a school year regarding attendance and I would like to thank you for your support with ensuring your child has a smooth start to the year and does not miss out. Students with a high

level of school attendance are more likely to benefit from education, achieve better examination results and are less likely to miss out on the multitude of experiences that Ysgol Clywedog provides.

Research suggests that 17 missed school days a year = one level GCSE grade drop in achievement. At Ysgol Clywedog every student should aim for 100% attendance. If it drops below 95% attendance, it becomes a concern. There will be times where absence is unavoidable, but please do not plan absence from school e.g. holidays during term time. Full attendance leads to the best educational outcomes – please give your child the best chance and make sure they are in school every day.

RRR - Ready, Respectful, Responsible

By keeping expectations simple we ensure that all the members of the school community are working together for the same goals; 'being the best we can be'. Page 8 of the new school planner shares some suggestions about how your child can achieve these expectations. There is also a lot of useful information you may find helpful on pages 1 to 16 in the planner.

Uniform

I would like to take this opportunity to thank parents and carers for the support regarding uniform. We have had an excellent first week, with the vast majority in the correct uniform or trying their hardest to rectify uniform problems. Our year 11s look particularly smart and professional in their new Year 11 jumpers. Whilst the majority of our students attend school each day with excellent uniform there are still a few who struggle to reach the expected standard. There have been some anomalies regarding some aspects of the uniform, eg trouser styles, length and type of skirts and colour and type of footwear. This letter will hopefully assist in helping to obtain a level of consistency about what the uniform should be.


The school appreciates that there are some circumstances that cannot be foreseen and therefore having the correct uniform may be difficult (a lost jumper, for example). However, the expectation of wearing full and correct uniform on a daily basis is still one of the standards that the school expects.

Wearing a school uniform instils pride and a sense of identity. It helps to establish the correct mind-set, where students are ready to learn. This is a pivotal part in ensuring that your child can get the most out of their learning, rather than staff challenging basic expected standards such as uniform. It also helps in preparing young people for the workplace where often uniform and strict standards are enforced.

Should a student be found to have the incorrect uniform, it may be necessary for you to be contacted. In extreme cases your child might be sent home to make the necessary amendments to their uniform before returning to their studies.

As a parent/carer your assistance in enforcing the uniform policy is always gratefully received. Students should not need to lose valuable time away from their education to address situations regarding any uniform issues if they are correctly attired and presented.

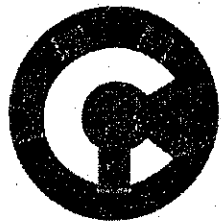
Thank you for your continued support
Yours sincerely



Matt Vickery
Headteacher

The way your child's work is marked.

What you might notice in your child's work.	Why this is better for your child.
<p>The marking looks different in different books. (E.g. English looks different to maths). It even looks different in my child's book and someone else's in the same class.</p>	<p>All of the current research into marking shows that it needs to be customised to different subjects, classes and even individual needs. Your child should therefore be receiving feedback they find useful. To help continuity in understanding the feedback across the school common symbols are used: Tick - What has been done well ? - A 'call to action' to improve the work R - Your child's response to the 'call to action'</p>
<p>There appear to be pieces of work which have not been marked, they are not even ticked.</p>	<p>So called 'tick and flick' marking can be misleading for the students and having too many targets from lots of small pieces of work can be confusing.</p> <p>All of our teachers in all subjects provide detailed written feedback on key pieces of work identified in the Learning Plans. These will usually be bigger pieces of work which assess a wide range of skills, knowledge and understanding. Smaller pieces of work which have not formally been marked by the teacher will still have been seen by them. The strengths and weaknesses of these pieces will feed into the targets set on the bigger pieces.</p>
<p>My child seems to be writing as much feedback as the teacher, sometimes more.</p>	<p>It is important that students have a working knowledge of the success criteria for tasks - just like their teachers. Students are encouraged to work out for themselves what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve before and after having it checked by the teacher.</p>
<p>My child has made some mistakes which have not been picked up. For example, they have missed some capital letters off the beginning of sentences but the teacher has not underlined them in red.</p>	<p>Teachers mark mostly for misconceptions (where students have constantly misunderstood things). Where students have made mistakes (like missing off a capital letter even though they understand how to use capital letters) they need to put these right themselves before handing work in. If students continue to make simple mistakes, they will be prompted by their teacher to correct them for themselves.</p>



Attendance Every day matters!

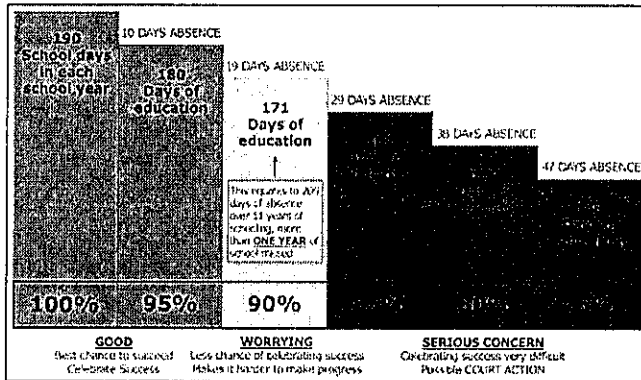


A year is 365 DAYS made up of... 190 days in school & 175 days holidays.
175 DAYS HOLIDAY A YEAR!!!
For family time, friends, visits, holidays, shopping, appointments....

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement.

Of students with attendance of less than 50%, only 3% manage to achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C including maths and English.

The majority of students who have over 95% attendance achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C.



Attendance is key to *academic achievement*.

If you are not in the lesson, you cannot progress!

Do not make excuses:
 Get to school before and after appointments.
 Do not take time off for birthdays or a new game release.

						Average Salary
1 GCSE	✓					£8240
2 GCSE	✓	✓				£9280
3 GCSE	✓	✓	✓			£10320
4 GCSE	✓	✓	✓	✓		£11360
5 GCSE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	£16000+



Rewards:

Attendance = Green Wave, postcards, reward trips
 Attendance = greater opportunities, greater choices, greater wages

It's your future so be in control of it!