PARENT NEWSLETTER





September 2023

A NOTE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Happy new school year! It has been wonderful to see all Nantgwyn pupils back in school over the past few weeks; big smiles on their faces to see their friends and staff and straight back to their learning. Making a few tweaks to the uniform policy has made a huge difference and it has been lovely to see all pupils wearing the items of their choice, comfortable while being fully in school uniform. The feedback on this from pupils has been really positive.

Learning has started really positively and productively. Lower school have been exploring the garden after a summer of 'growth' and have found that wild flowers have joined the many different grasses, plants and insects. They have already undertaken their first trip of the year to Cosmeston Lakes in Penarth. Middle school have started to explore their themes through their caru dysgu lessons. We structure the learning around questions; many of which come from the pupils and the teachers tell me that there are some very challenging questions there this year! Great! Upper school are following their timetables towards qualifications with a commendable approach.

Over the past weeks, our assemblies and registration times have focused on being #teamnantgwyn. We have reinforced that we are one team of pupils, staff, parents and governors all working together towards three things:

- Progressing our learning so that we get the very best outcomes.
- Developing as and being an amazing human being.
- Having a nice day, every day.

Our move to ClassCharts is almost complete. With anything new, it will take a little getting used to. We moved our communications to ClassCharts as we were already using it for other aspects and parents had told us that having multiple apps was a pain. Hopefully, as we get a little more used to ClassCharts it will really support quicker and easier communication. If you need any help with ClassCharts, there is a help guide on the school website <u>www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk</u> and/or you can get in touch with the school teams via lowerschool, middleschool or upperschool (all @ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk). Our website has been updated significantly over the summer holidays and has a range of information including term dates and INSET days for the year. Please let us know if there is any information you would find helpful to have on the website. Our annual calendar of events will be with parents shortly to help you plan through to July.

Our after school clubs are up and running across lower, middle and upper school offering a wider range of activities. We have been able to work with outside providers to supplement our offer this year with additional sessions being run at subsidised prices. While our members of staff have an incredibly diverse range of skills, knowledge and experiences to run clubs, working with additional providers means that we are able to extend the choices of different opportunities for our pupils. If you have any links to further organisations that would consider this arrangement, please let us know.

Music lessons have also started with RCT music and it is lovely to walk through the building to hear singing and a variety of instruments being played, including drums! If your child is interested in having music lessons you can find information here: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/musicenrolment

You will find that the key focus of this issue is attendance. There are many aspects of education where research contradicts itself however the one place where there is universal agreement is that attendance impacts not only attainment and outcomes but also a child's experience socially and emotionally. Since the pandemic, attendance to schools has dropped across Wales and Nantgwyn is no exception. Every lesson missed is a learning gap created. While our teachers work incredibly hard to 'patch' these gaps, it is a case that this becomes more difficult the more gaps there are. As a mum of three children. I know that sometimes children don't want to come to school and this can be really difficult. There are often reasons and we are more than happy to work together with you and your child to support improved attendance; we are one team.

With warm wishes,

Ms Laura Morris Headteacher

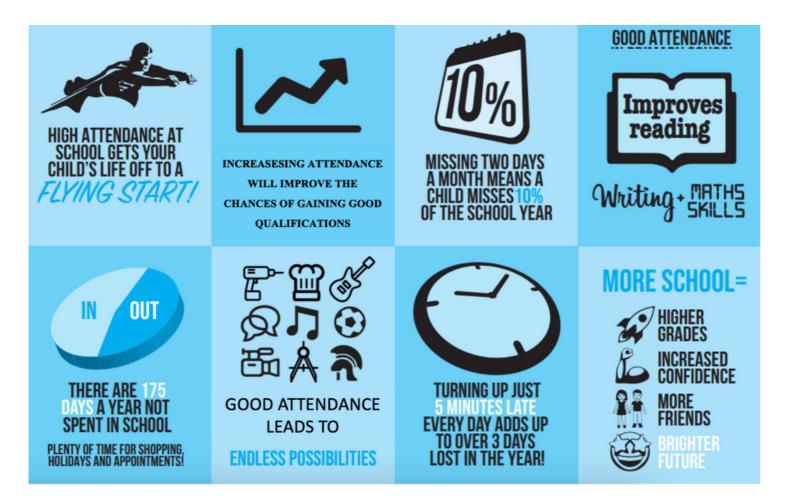
Attendance

From "Belonging, engaging and participating", (Welsh Government)

Regular school attendance has a positive effect on children and young people and a strong impact on learner outcomes, standards and progression. Within this, regular attendance supports the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and on the conceptual understanding needed for further study and success in the workplace. Analysis shows that examination outcomes link strongly to attendance rates, for example, where a modest increase in absence can lower outcomes. Lessons missed can mean missing key information, skills and ideas.

Good attendance also has a positive effect on wellbeing. Establishing good attendance patterns from an early age is vital for social development. For example, the more time a child spends with other children in the classroom and as part of broader school-organised activities, the more chance they have of making friends, of feeling included, and of developing social skills, confidence and self-esteem. Conversely, extended absence from school is linked with behavioural and social problems. These effects can be long lasting and can affect a young person's mental health and their long-term life chances. Absences can start a negative cycle, where learners start to be absent for reasons such as bullying or not coping with school work, with prolonged absence only likely to make the situation harder to resolve. The inter-relationship between attendance and wellbeing is considered so strong that attendance is often considered a proxy measure for learner wellbeing.

Attending school also supports learners' wider development as full and rounded members of society. The Curriculum for Wales is based on four purposes that demonstrate the breadth of the academic, wellbeing and social benefits that learners gain by attending school. Because of the well-established links between attendance and attainment, wellbeing and citizenship, improving attendance has long been an important policy aim for governments, local authorities and individual schools. Internationally, the advantages of education are such that the right to a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities is one of the seven core aims of the Welsh Government based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).



Our school attendance is currently often less than 90%. This means that a significant amount of pupils are missing out on a significant part of their learning. All pupils should aim to attend school 95% of the time, or even better- 100% so as not to miss out on the exciting opportunities on offer!

Punctuality

Punctuality is also as important as attendance. Not only is punctuality an important life skill, but further, learning starts promptly each day and pupils who arrive late are missing vital sessions of the day including literacy sessions and parts of the day where important information is given.

As a reminder school starts for middle and upper school pupils at 8.40 and lower school pupils at 8.55. Pupils should be at their classrooms for this time.

When a child can and cannot come to school

There are no restrictions on school attendance, there are no expectations for pupils to test for Covid and so all pupils should be in school every day unless they are seriously unwell. Should you have any queries about whether your child should or should not come to school, you can look to NHS Wales 111 for guidance.

<u>Is my child too ill for school? - NHS</u> (www.nhs.uk)

Holidays

Holidays within school time are not authorised and we ask that parents books any holidays outside of the school term.

Attendance to school- How can parents help?

- Make school attendance a priority.
- Talk about the importance of attending school every day.
- Ensure that your child attends school on time so that they do not miss their morning mark.
- Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework, packing their bag the night before and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day.
- Don't let your child stay home unless truly sick. Complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety.
- Talk to your child's school team if they have any worries or anxieties about school- these can quite often be resolved easily.
- Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers or if necessary.
- Communicate with the school.
- Know the school's attendance policy.
- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in behaviour.
- Check on your child's attendance to be sure absences are not piling up.
- Ask for help from the school, other parents or community agencies if you're having trouble getting your child to school.
- Book holidays outside of school time.

Using ClassCharts for monitoring and reporting attendance

Selecting the attendance tab will present you with a table of your child's attendance data for the past 31 days. To change the displayed timeframe of attendance records, click on the date button and select the date range of your choice.

Attendance records fall under four categories:

Present: Your child attended the lesson.

Late: Your child was late to the lesson.

Authorised absence: Your child did not attend the lesson, but had a valid reason for doing so.

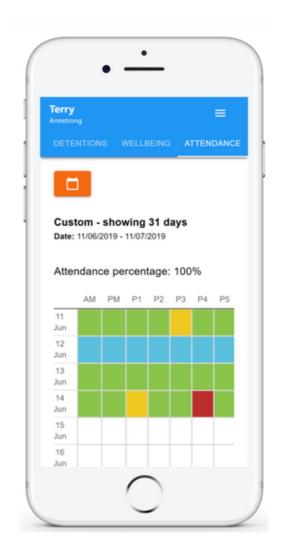
Unauthorised absence: Your child did not attend the lesson and did not have a valid reason to do so.

Reporting absences

To report an absence, click on the absence tab and then the report new absence button, stating the reason for your child's absence.

You can also include up to 5 files in your absence report as supporting evidence. To do this, click on the attach supporting evidence button and select the files of your choice. - This can be used for medical letters etc.

Click on the submit button to send your pupil's absence report to our school.



How we can support where there are difficulties?

If you are having any difficulties with your child attending school or if your child is anxious or worried about going to school, please ask your childs' school team for help. We have lots of experience in these situations and above all, we are here to support, working with you as a team to support you and your child with their attendance.

School prospectus

Our updated school prospectus can be accessed here with general information about the school.

https://www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk/abo ut-us/prospectus

School website

Our school website has been fully updated and has lots of new information to support families with queries throughout the year.

https://www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk/





Curriculum

The Ysgol Nantgwyn curriculum is designed to take account of the needs of all pupils and offers a broad and balanced range of experiences for all pupils. We recognise that pupils are individuals and therefore the way in which they experience the curriculum may differ. Our curriculum is iterative in its development and provides opportunities for pupils to inform and lead their learning. It provides opportunities for pupils to have meaningful learning experiences, to consider themselves and others and the part they can play in their local community as well as the wider world. The Ysgol Nantgwyn curriculum presents pupils with a range of big questions, gives them the opportunity to ask questions and enables their development of knowledge and skills in the exploration of possible answers through a variety of learning experiences. Our staff will carefully listen to our pupils and ensure that their thoughts, views and needs inform their learning.

Through consultation with pupils, parents, staff and governors, we have agreed that our curriculum will place increased emphasis on the following identified needs:

- Understanding their responsibilities and rights
- Respecting the rights and needs of others
- Thinking creatively to solve problems
- Sharing ideas and emotions in a variety of ways
- Setting goals
- Speaking and listening to others effectively
- Building up and applying knowledge
- Forming good relationships based on trust and mutual respect
- Building mental and emotional well-being

Pupils will explore the following themes this term through their Caru Dysgu lessons:

Nursery	Ме
Reception	Independence
Year 1 and 2	Team
Year 3	Culture
Year 4	Disease
Year 5	Rights
Year 6	Identity
Year 7	Together
Year 8	Crime and punishment

Across years 9, 10 and 11 pupils learning will take more of a subject based approach in order to prepare pupils for their formal qualifications.

Information on what pupils are learning for all year groups in all subject areas can be found on the Ysgol Nantgwyn webpage as follows:

https://www.ysgolnan tgwyn.co.uk/curriculu m-and-learning/whatare-we-learning

Independent learning

At Ysgol Nantgwyn we call our homework independent learning. An independent learning grid is issued to all pupils via Seesaw or Google Classroom each half term, although some of the tasks on the grid may be weekly. This grid has also been sent to parents via ClassCharts.

Pupils are expected to complete all tasks. All independent learning tasks are designed to support pupils to develop, extend and enhance their learning in the classroom. It is vital that pupils complete these tasks to support them with their learning and so that they make the necessary progress. Please ask your child to complete all tasks this half term by 20.10.2023. All completed tasks will result in positive points and go towards their report.

A copy of the independent learning grids can also be on the Ysgol Nantgwyn webpage: <u>https://www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk/curr</u> <u>iculum-and-learning/independent-</u> <u>learning</u>



Reading expectations

Reading is and remains a priority for all pupils. There is no doubt that literacy is the essential element in all pupils' development and opens the door to a brighter future. We here at Ysgol Nantgwyn are committed to developing fluent and confident readers and you as parents can support us in our journey for your child.

Using the following link: <u>Reading Eggs Parents Guide</u> you can support your child's reading.

Lower school: All pupils in lower school need to be reading every night for approximately 20/30-minutes. For our youngest pupils, this could be a parent reading a book at bedtime, showing their child the words as they go. For our slightly older pupils, we send age-appropriate reading books home, some will need support with these, and others will be able to read more independently, either way, we would encourage all to be reading out loud.

Middle school: pupils in years 4 to 6 follow the Reading Eggs programme and should be completing this 5 times a week for 20 minutes, working through the levels and maps, along with completing the weekly assignments set by their teacher. Pupils should access the library area of the programme in addition to this and read a variety of books. Please contact your child's teacher if you need a reminder of your child's login details.

Pupils in years 7 to 9 should spend 20 minutes, 4 times a week reading for pleasure. This can be a novel, magazine or any reading material that pupils enjoy. As a reminder Gwyn pupils will need to wear their PE kit to school as follows:

Faculty of Life - PE KIT WEEK 1 (Gwyn)				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Year 3B	Nursery Year 1/2A - SM Year 1/2B - SM Year 1/2C- SM Year 3B - SM Year 4A - SM Year 4B - SM Year 5A - SM Year 5B - SM Year 6A - SM	Year 1/2B Year 4A Year 5A	Year 3A Year 6A	Reception Year 1/2A Year 1/2C

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MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Year 3B Year 4B Year 5B Year 6B	Nursery Year 2A - SM Year 2B - SM Year 3A- SM Year 3B - SM Year 4A - SM Year 4B - SM Year 5A - SM Year 5B - SM Year 6A - SM	Year 1/2B Year 4A Year 5A	Year 3A	Reception Year 1/2A Year 1/2C Year 4B

Nant pupils will have received a timetable of when their wellbeing and PE lessons take place. They should wear their school uniform to school and change in school for their PE lessons.



Extra-curricular activities- autumn term

Lower school

NAME OF CLUB	DAY	STAFF/ COMPANY	LOCATION	YEAR GROUPS
Variety sports	Monday	People and work	Gwyn Hall	nursery- reception
Zumba	Tuesday	Mrs Davies	Gwyn hall	nursery- year 6
Construction	Wednesday	Mrs Dowling	G5/6	reception - year 2
Reading Eggs	Wednesday	Mrs Wilkins	G4	year 1 and 2
Painting	Wednesday	Mrs Basini James	Gwyn hall	reception - year 2
Hip hop dance	Wednesday	Tiptop Dance	Gwyn hall	nursery - reception
Hip hop dance	Thursday	Tiptop Dance	Gwyn hall	years 3 - 6

Middle school Gwyn- years 4 to 6

NAME OF CLUB	DAY	STAFF/ COMPANY	LOCATION	YEAR GROUPS
Rugby	Tuesday	Mr. Smith	MUGA	years 5-6
STEM	Tuesday	Mrs. Francis	G15/16	years 4-6
Drama club	Tuesday	Drama studio	N12	years 5-11
Zumba	Tuesday	Mrs. Davies	Gwyn Hall	nursery - year 6
Welsh animation club	Wednesday	Menter Laith	N31	years 5-11
Multi-sports	Wednesday	Tiptop	Lower MUGA	years 4-6
Reading eggs independent learning	Thursday	Mr. Stanton	G17/18	years 4-6
Photography	Thursday	Mrs. Durbin	N50	years 4- 8
Urdd club	Thursday	Mrs. Thomas	N40	years 4 - 8
Hip hop dance	Thursday	Tiptop Dance	Gwyn Hall	years 3-6

Extra-curricular activities- autumn term

Nant building

NAME OF CLUB	DAY	STAFF/ COMPANY	LOCATION	YEAR GROUPS
Multisports	Monday	TipTop Dance	Sports halls	years 7-11
Drama	Tuesday	Mrs. Pearce	Drama studio	years 5-11
Circuits/gym	Tuesday	Mrs. P. Jones	Gym	years 7-8
Football	Tuesday	Mr. Maharg	3G	years 7-8
Rugby	Tuesday	Connah	3G	years 9-11
Tricks and flicks	Tuesday	TipTop Dance	Sports hall	years 7-9
Drama	Tuesday	Mrs Pearce	Drama studio	years 5-11
Circuits/gym	Wednesday	Mrs P. Jones	Gym	years 9-11
Football	Wednesday	Mr Maharg	3G	years 9-11
Rugby	Wednesday	Sporting Marvels	3G	years 7-8
Netball	Wednesday	Mrs Durbin	Sports hall	years 7-11
English language	Wednesday	Mrs James	N45	year 11
Welsh animation club	Wednesday	Menter laith	N31	years 5-11
Science independent learning	Thursday	Science Faculty	Science faculty	years 7-11
English literature	Thursday	Mrs. James	N45	years 10-11
Urdd	Thursday	Mrs. Thomas	N42	years 4-8
Photography	Thursday	Mrs Durbin	N50	years 4-8

How to book

Clubs can be booked via a form on the ClassCharts booking app. Parents will receive a form for each child as the club's programme differs throughout the school. Select the club that you want by ticking the box on the appropriate day. At the bottom of the form it is important to complete the contact details and for Gwyn pupils whether they are being collected or permitted to walk home. After the indicated deadline for clubs selection, you will receive an email if your child has been allocated a place for their selected club. All clubs have a maximum number and club places are given on a first come first serve basis.

All Gwyn pupils who are collected will be released from the Gwyn Hall at the end of the club, 4pm. Those pupils allowed to walk home will be released from site at the end of the club at 4pm. Nant pupils will all be released from Nant pupil entrance at 4pm.



Pupil leadership team

It is with great pleasure that we welcome our lead pupils for 2023/24. Please welcome Tyler Phillips, Grace Marsh, Eli Lewis, Lilly Sayce, Seren Cottey and Elliot Sayce. These pupils prepared a 'vote for me' presentation and were voted in by their peers to represent the voice of all pupils across the school.

This is a fabulous leadership opportunity, and we are looking forward to working with them throughout this academic year.



Community pantry

Our Pantry continues to be open on a Monday and Thursday between 3 and 4pm. It is neither a food bank or a shop and possibly a bit confusing as such! You can make donations of items to it, you can bring something to swap for something else, you can make a cash contribution, you can take a few items if you are not able to make a contribution. All are welcome - it may be that you need a last ingredient for dinner and it is quicker to stop with us during pick up than stop again at a shop, you may have bought three packets of something and, having tried the first, want to donate the other two to the Pantry! Please try and pop your head in and have a chat with staff to see how you can engage.

Pre-loved uniform

We also, at any point in the year, are grateful for any donations of uniforms to add to those that we already have. We have a range of new and pre-loved uniform in great condition available to all. You can donate by dropping off in the blue bins in the foyer of either building and collect/choose by appointment with your school team.







Static site at break and lunchtimes

From the start of September, we will not be allowing any vehicles to access the Ysgol Nantgwyn site during break and lunch time. This is so that the car park does not have any moving vehicles while there is a high volume of pupils crossing to get from the building to the 3G/MUGA and vice versa.

Should you need to collect your child during these times, please get in touch to make arrangements with us.

Class Charts

At Ysgol Nantgwyn we use ClassCharts as our main form of communication. You can use ClassCharts to keep track of your child's behaviour, view attendance records and report your child's absence if they are unwell, access their weekly timetable and view announcements and messages. If you have more than one child, you can access ClassCharts information about your children from a single, centralised parent account. ClassCharts for parents can be accessed via the ClassCharts website, or through iOS and Android apps.

You should have received your parent code for your child. If you have not received this please email:

lowerschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk middleschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk upperschool@ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk

A parents help guide for ClassCharts can be found at:

https://www.ysgolnantgwyn.co.uk/parents-and-pupils/classcharts-attendancereporting

Please remember to turn on your notifictions to receive messages.

