

Ysgol Harri Tudur Henry Tudor School

Headteacher/Pennaeth
Mrs Fiona E.J. Kite
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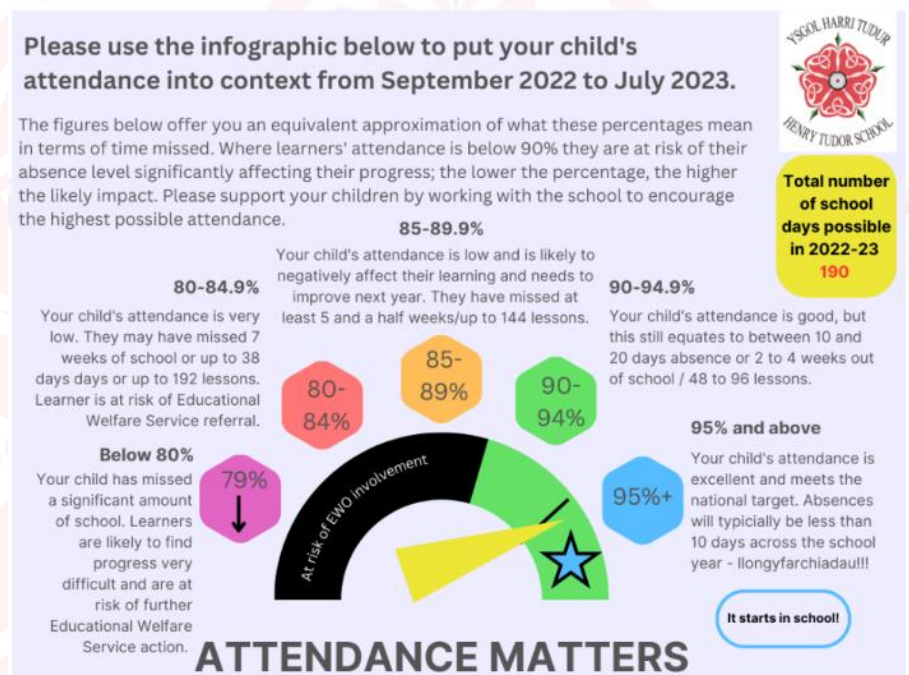
Learners First Dysgwyr yng Nghyntaf

04.09.2023

Dear Parent / Carer,

I hope you and your family have had an enjoyable summer. At the start of the new school year, it is important that the school plans for an excellent start and that parents and learners reflect on their attendance level last year, whilst also understanding how changes in policy this year that may affect them. The diagram below indicates how your child's attendance figures from the end of last term equate to approximate days missed:

Firstly, can I thank the overwhelming majority of learners and their parents for maintaining high attendance last year wherever possible. It was very pleasing to note that in comparison with 2021-22 figures, our attendance improvement has been proportionally higher than many other schools since Covid-19; thank you, your support is very much appreciated. Whilst we acknowledge that there is no escaping genuine occasional illness (it happens to us all) there is real value in ensuring all learners attend whenever possible, even if not feeling 100%.



We sometimes have learners off school with minor ailments or who ask to leave during the day when really this could be avoided. Learners are reminded that they must not contact home to ask to leave school without the approval of the First Aider. This may not sound particularly sympathetic, however every lesson missed results in learning lost, which makes progress difficult for learners. I would also like to thank all parents and learners who attended Attendance Clinics when invited to do so, your engagement enables us to support learners improve attendance and catch-up lost work.

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Could I also take this opportunity to remind some parents that receipt of an Attendance Letter is not intended to insult, upset or criticise, instead the letters clearly include the offer to support to learners and parent / carers alike. Letters are sent where attendance drops below agreed pre-determined thresholds at different times of the year including 94%, 90% and 85%, or where attendance remains a concern following initial letters or an Attendance Clinic appointment. The letters should not be considered patronising or threatening, they are adapted from Local Education Authority templates that invite parents and carers to discuss ways to address low learner attendance or recover from absences, even sometimes when these are known to the school in advance. We are duty bound to remind parents/carers in attendance letters that persistent absences may result in referral to the Educational Welfare Service, including the option of Penalty Notices where necessary.

From September 2023 the school will be reintroducing Penalty Notices to encourage those who do not see the value in regular attendance. Most other schools in the county reintroduced these Penalty Notices from 2022/23, however we decided to postpone their use, recognising the economic challenges faced within the community. Penalty Notices can be applied where a learner misses 10 sessions of attendance (mornings and / or afternoons) in a half-term period without parental contact and appropriate reasons for absence. Where absence becomes routine and is unnecessarily condoned by parents, such authorisation will be noted but ultimately rejected by the school.

Penalty Notices will also be applied to any unauthorised holidays of 1 week or more taken by learners during the school year. These are routine measures that are already used consistently by other schools with the Authority and it is necessary that we reintroduce them as part of a common framework to address the small, but significant minority of persistent absenteeism within the county.

Thank you for your support and positive communication at all times. Can I ask you to remember to inform the school of all unavoidable absences using the absence line.

Yours sincerely and with every best wish for a successful school year.



Mr J. Jones

Assistant Headteacher

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