



Blackwood Comprehensive School – Ysgol Gyfun y Coed Duon

Headteacher/Prifathro RK Pawar BA (hons)
Tŷ-Isha Terrace, Blackwood NP12 1ER
Telephone/Ffone 01495 225566/223326
Fax/Ffacs 01495 225625 Email: BLKCA@CAERPHILLY.GOV.UK



Ymdrech I Drechu – Strive To Succeed

To Parents/Guardians of All Pupils

5th September 2017

As we begin the new school year, it is lovely to welcome (and welcome back) pupils to school after the long summer break, for what I am sure will be a very successful year for Blackwood Comprehensive School.

1. New parents
2. Free School Meals
3. Communication with parents
4. Year 10 and 11 examinations
5. Celebration of achievement
6. Attendance and holiday leave
7. Governing Body and PTA
8. Car parking

1. New Parents

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the parents of pupils who are new to the school; it was a pleasure to meet many of you at the welcome evening held last term. Moving from primary to secondary school is always an important moment in a child's life and we have made every effort to make this transition as smooth as possible.

We want to ensure that your child is happy in school and has settled in well. With that in mind, we will be inviting you to school to discuss the progress your child has made during the half first term on a special tutor day which will take place this half term during the week beginning October 9th. We would also like to invite you to a meeting for new parents to be held at the school at **6.30 on Thursday 21st September.**

2. Guidelines for Eligibility for Free School Meals

“If you think your child or children might qualify for free school meals, you must apply.”
Your child(ren) could get a free school lunch every day.

You will also be making a difference to the amount of additional money Blackwood Comprehensive School will receive for educating your child and others.” This is because the school receives its Pupil Deprivation Grant based on our Free School Meals Uptake.



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Are you eligible? The provision of free school meals is confined to families in receipt of Income Support, Income Related Employment Support Allowance, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Guarantee Element of State Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit with an income less than £16,190 (Any Families in receipt of Working Tax Credit do not qualify). Please contact Mrs Jeannette Beecham at school for further information.

3. Communication with parents

In our determination to improve our communication with all parents, we will be holding tutor sessions for the parents targeted pupils during the course of this term. At these meetings we will discuss pupils' target and progress against targets, as well matters such as attendance and general wellbeing.. We will also be holding our traditional parents' evenings where you will have the opportunity to discuss matters with subject teachers. If you are unable to attend any of these meetings, please contact your child's Progress Manager who will make arrangements to meet with you at a convenient time.

In addition, I will be holding surgeries for parents term. These are open to any parents who would like to meet with me to discuss any school matter. The dates for these meetings are as follows and will be held in the school's LRC (upstairs, main block) between 4.00 and 7.00 p.m. Please feel free to drop in to see me.

Surgery 4.00 – 7.00	Date
1	Wednesday 4 th October
2	Thursday 15 th February
3	Tuesday 22 nd May

Parents are also encouraged to contact the school with any concerns and queries at any time, and we will endeavour to deal with all matters quickly and efficiently.

We will publish details of all key events and activities, including parents' evenings, study sessions and information events on the school website, and inform you via text of these in advance.

4. Year 10 and 11 examination results

We are very pleased with the performance of pupils in this year's examinations. This year, pupils have been sitting a completely new set of examinations this year, with major changes in subjects such as English and Mathematics being introduced. We cannot meaningfully compare pupils' results this year with previous years. However, pupils of all abilities have done exceptionally well and we are proud of their achievements



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These results reflect the hard work of pupils, subject teachers and associate staff, and I congratulate them on their achievements this year.

Year 11 2017

Pupils in this year's Year 11 will have already taken examinations and other assessments which lead to GCSE qualifications and we have a good idea of how each pupil is proceeding in each subject. We have also established a mentoring system for pupils in Year 11.

Outcomes so far are very encouraging and we will be issuing a 'November Challenge' to all pupils to be as prepared as they possibly can be for the GCSE exams in English and Maths which take place at start of November. I cannot emphasize enough how important these examinations are for pupils and we want all pupils to be fully engaged in preparations.

I will be issuing an invitation to all Year 11 pupils to attend the Headteacher's Prom in July 2017 at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. Please be aware that this invitation will be open only to pupils with at least 94% attendance (unless there are significant extenuating circumstances) with good behaviour and conduct.

5. Celebration of achievements

We are always keen to celebrate the many achievements of pupils, inside and outside school and this may, on occasion, involve **using photographs**. If you do **not** wish your child's photograph to be part of any publication at school, please inform Mr Lewis in writing.

The school has traditionally endeavoured to praise and reward pupils for their effort as well as their attainment. At our school, we value pupils for what they have tried to achieve as well as what they have achieved and it has been such a pleasure to reward pupils with certificates and prizes for their hard work whatever their ability throughout the year.

Information regarding pupils' achievement is often published on the school's website (<http://learn.caerphilly.org.uk/blackwoodcomprehensive>) along with other key information. This information is updated on a weekly basis, and includes reference to current and forthcoming events and activities

6. Attendance and Holiday Leave

Good attendance is essential if your child is to reach his or her potential in school and we would like to work with you to ensure attendance is as good as possible. In 2015.6 the school's attendance was 93.2% and we know this is an area for improvement for all schools, including Blackwood. We aim for 95% overall, so we need your support in ensuring all pupils have excellent attendance – wherever possible. If a pupil has an attendance of 95%, it still means that 2 weeks of school have been missed in an academic year.



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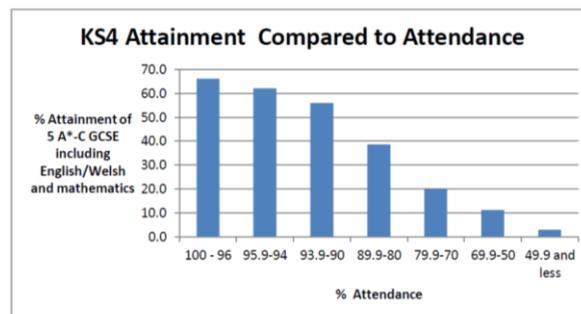
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If your child is unable to attend school, please contact the school by 9.00 a.m. The school has a message recording system (01495 225566) where, if you cannot contact reception, you can leave a message. If your child is absent without an explanation, you will be contacted automatically by our 'Truancy Call' system and asked to provide a reason for your child's absence. Please provide a note for your child's form tutor when they return to school, so any absence can be authorised.

Please be aware that **holiday leave during term time is not encouraged as any absence will affect your child's educational progress and attainment.** Please contact the school if any such absences are planned. Only in exceptional circumstances, and only if your child has good attendance, will a request for holiday leave be granted.

The following table gives an indication of the impact of attendance on pupils' performance.

The relationship between doing well at school and good attendance is clear.



The link between attendance and attainment is so clear. If pupils are in school they will do well and I encourage all parents to ensure that pupils' attendance is as good as possible. The School now has the authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices in situations where pupils are taken out of school without authorisation. We are also offering incentives

7. Governing Body and PTA

We are extremely fortunate in having a very dedicated Governing Body which works hard to support the school in ensuring a high quality education for your child. The first AGM of the school year will take place on **Wednesday 27th September.**

All parents can support the school through our PTA activities which take place throughout the year to raise extra funds for the school and enjoy the school's community spirit. The PTA Committee will meet for the first time on **Wednesday 27th September** at 6.30 in the school staffroom. Should you wish to attend and support the school in this way, you would be made very welcome.



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8. Car parking

In the interest of pupil safety I would ask parents not to drive cars onto the school site at the start and end of the school day:

Morning: 8.00 – 9.00

Afternoon: 2.45 – 3.30

In addition, parking on pavements or next to double yellow lines on the school site is prohibited.

As stated earlier, we are keen to improve our communication with parents this year through sharing information about the curriculum, your child's progress and other aspects of school life. Our 'Call Parents' system will enable parents to receive important information via text message, and I would ask all parents who wish to be contacted in this way to ensure that we receive up to date contact details, particularly mobile numbers.

In the spirit of partnership, I would ask you to sign Blackwood Comprehensive School Home/School Agreement if you have not already done so. If you have any concerns or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at school.

Yours sincerely

RK Pawar

R K Pawar - Headteacher