

18th October 2024

Dear parents/ carers,

I can't believe that half term has passed by in the blink of an eye. I wish to thank you for the support you have given us here at school as we work together to encourage and guide our young people to strive for success. I wish you all a restful and peaceful half term.

The concept of rest is introduced in the Bible as early as Genesis chapter two, where it states, "And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So, God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation." (Genesis 2:2-3) Notably, the seventh day of creation does not have an ending demarcated as the preceding six days of creation did, with references to an evening and morning. The suggestion is time is not limited to "the day" and in our current case it extends to the week. God entering into rest on the seventh day is described in contrast to his work of creation. Therefore, rest must be distinct from active work. Additionally, since God entered into rest himself and blessed the day he did so, this idea of rest presumably has an intrinsic goodness and desirableness to it. So, I add to my comment about a restful and peaceful half term and include joyful.

Year 11

A simple reminder that mock exams begin as you return from half term. Please continue with your planned revision building in times to have a rest over the half term and doing something different to ensure you don't experience overload.

Reading

I wish to share the attached document from Mrs Nelson who leads our whole school reading strategy. Please see attached.

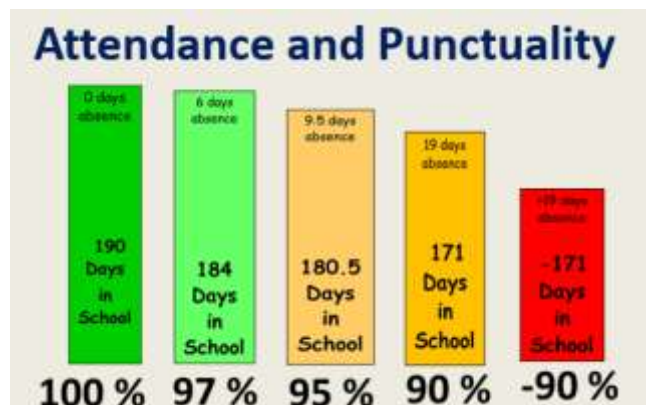
Attendance

Thank you for ensuring that our high standards around attendance are being maintained. These efforts are reflected in the fact our school attendance is currently 93.7%, which is nearly 2% higher than this time last year and 1% higher than national average. It is important to remember that this can only be achieved through the support of home and ensuring children instil good habits where attendance and punctuality is concerned.

Therefore, I will take this opportunity to remind parents of the changes made by the DfE, which came into effect in September 2024: **Penalty notices will be issued for any 10 unauthorised absences within a 10-week period (this is equivalent to 5 schools days). Penalty notices will rise to £160, per child, per parent. If paid within 21 days, this will be reduced to £80. If a second penalty notice is issued, this will be at £160 but will not have the option of being reduced. A 3rd penalty notice cannot be issued within 3 years of the first one. If the threshold (10 sessions) is met for a 3rd time, this will result in prosecution.**

Being late after the register closes at 9:10am, without a valid reason (e.g: a medical appointment) will be considered an unauthorised absence.

At St Gabriel's **we aim for all students to have 100% attendance** and we reward this. However, good attendance means being in school at least 97% of the time (184 – 190 days).



365 days in a year	190 school days in total	Absence
100%	190 days attendance	0
95%	180 days attendance	2 weeks
90%	171 days attendance	4 weeks
85%	162 days attendance	6 weeks (nearly)
80%	153 days attendance	Over a half term absence

Research shows that children with less than 95% attendance do not achieve as well as their peers with 95%+ attendance. That may be stark as a reality but it equates to nearly a grade per subject behind their peers with excellent attendance. We at St. Gabriel's want your child to have real choices post 16 and beyond through strong appropriate academic performance during their time as part of the St Gabriel's family. Thank you for supporting us in keeping our attendance standards high.

It is with this in mind that I would like to congratulate the 425 students who have achieved 100% attendance for this half term. These students will receive a Golden Ticket when they return after half term, which will allow them to go down to lunch early on one of the days the first week back.

I would also like to draw your attention to some information I shared in my letter dated 4th October 2024:

Culture and Standards

We will be making a change to our Reflections Room provision. After half term, any student who has to spend time in our internal isolation will automatically stay in school until 3:45pm. This is so all the students who are in there to access their curriculum work during the school day and then complete a reflection activity in the time after lessons. We believe that by giving that extra time for students to reflect on their actions it will help reduce the chance of them having to spend time in there again.

Uniform

Thank you for your support in helping us continue our drive on uniform standards. We are beginning to notice that there are a few young people wearing false eyelashes, excessive make up and nose studs/rings. Please can you refer to the uniform policy that clearly states make up must be natural looking, and false eye lashes and nose jewellery should not be worn. The research shows that the most successful schools have and uphold high uniform standards, and it is based on this that we will be looking to reform our uniform policy for the start of the Spring term where make-up, jewellery and false eye lashes will be readdressed.

I wish to share a message from our school counsellor Ashleigh Todd

We realise that half term can be a challenging time for our families as our routine changes. Difficult situations may occur for pupils, families, and those around us.

A helpful app and website called 'Hub of Hope' <https://hubofhope.co.uk/> is a great place to search for different mental health services within any area of the United Kingdom. There are various subheadings to search for help, dependent on the challenge you are facing, from abuse, through to crisis support.

Please use this as a first point tool, to guide you in the right direction of help.

Finally, many thanks again for your support of school life. My half term unfortunately or not does not match my family's half term this time. I therefore guarantee it will begin with a list and I will turn to those much-needed DIY matters that I have neglected in recent weeks.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Braithwaite', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr S Braithwaite
Interim Headteacher