

To: Parents/Carers of Students of Years 7-11

Our Ref: 87804158

2 October 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Attendance Counts

I hope you and your family are well and your child has had a positive and enjoyable start to the new term.

As we settle back into a new academic year, I wanted to highlight the importance of school attendance, not only in terms of academic attainment but crucially the nurturing of friendships and general wellbeing. At the heart of the educational experience is a simple truth: moments matter and attendance counts. This isn't just a slogan; it's a principle backed by evidence and the collective experience of educators across the world.

Why Attending Every Day Matters

Every day, every lesson presents a unique moment of opportunity for learning. It is a chance to engage with new ideas, to collaborate with peers, and to build upon and embed the knowledge gained in the lesson before. The cumulative effect of these moments is what shapes each student's academic journey. When a student is absent, the loss isn't just about the hours missed; it is about the moments of interaction, the shared experience and the collective inquiry that cannot be replicated outside the classroom walls. Research consistently shows that regular attendance is a critical factor in educational success. According to the Department for Education, students who frequently miss school are at a significant disadvantage academically and we've detailed below the impact that absence had on the progress made by our students taking their GCSE's last year.

Attendance	% of Year group	Progress 8
Below 90%	19%	-0.19
90 – 96%	36%	0.42
96% or above	45%	0.74
All Students	100%	0.45

A Shared Responsibility

We know that ensuring regular attendance is a shared responsibility. For most students, the best place to be during term-time is in school, surrounded by the support of their friends and teachers. This is important not just for your child's learning, but also for their overall wellbeing, wider development, and their mental health. School is a mini version of society; it's where young people learn to navigate social contexts, develop resilience, and cultivate relationships. Absences can mean missing out on key social moments that cannot be recreated if learned from a textbook.



How We Can Help

As a parent/carer, it can be difficult to know when to send your child into school if they are feeling unwell or are mildly anxious, and so we want you to know that there is support and information available to help you make the right decision. Please use the pupil support hub on the school's website to access additional support and information by following this link

<https://southhunsley.org.uk/student-support-hub/>

Alongside this we would encourage parents/carers who have any concerns about their child's attendance to make contact with us as soon as possible so that support can be offered to help overcome any challenges your child may be facing. Please do this by contacting your child's Head of Year or the Attendance Team.

We also understand that some children face greater barriers to attendance, such as those with long-term medical conditions, and special educational needs and disabilities, and need support with a more specialised and individual approach. Where this is the case we would encourage parents/carers to make contact with our SEND department so that appropriate support can be explored.

Further Guidance

In line with the new [statutory guidance](#) which came into force in August, we have taken time to review and refresh our attendance policy, a copy of which can be found on our website here

<https://southhunsley.org.uk/files/uploads/2022/11/Attendance-Policy-June-24-v8.pdf>

As in previous years we will only grant term-time requests for absence in exceptional circumstances. However, we would like our families to be aware that, as part of the updated government guidance, schools must now consider using a penalty notice when a child's absence reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. In doing so, it is likely that such penalty notices will be issued where unauthorised term-time holidays result in this national threshold being met.

Can I thank you for your continued support in making attendance at school a priority and wish you, your child and family a successful and rewarding year.

Yours faithfully,

Mitch Trainor
Deputy Headteacher