

To Parents/Carers of Students 7-11

Our Ref: 87363663

Re: Attendance

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you and your family are well and thank you for the support you have given in ensuring a positive start to the academic year and second half of the Autumn Term.

As we get further into the school year, we would like to remind you of the importance of good attendance for all students. Every day a student is absent is a lost opportunity for learning. Too many absences can not only affect progress for the absent student but also can disrupt learning for the entire class. Research shows that students who consistently miss school are at risk of lower academic achievement.

Bringing awareness to the issue of persistent absence, and providing information and resources to parents and carers can help improve student attendance and, consequently, student achievement. We saw during the pandemic how important it was for all students to be learning in-person from their teachers and alongside their classmates. However, we understand there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter aims to explain the approach we are following to manage attendance.

### Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

### Unacceptable Reasons

The following reasons are not acceptable:

- shopping visits
- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- parents'/carers' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- parental/carer illness

### Illness and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone, e-mail or the SIMS parent app on the first day of absence before 8:30am. It is also useful for us to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information we have a duty to contact you so that we can be sure of the child's whereabouts as part of our safeguarding routines.

Where a child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents/carers in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

### Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents/carers notify us in advance and also come to the reception before collecting children. Please bring your child to the reception on returning from the appointment. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences.

### **Lateness**

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present for registration; this is done at 8.40 am each day so we recommend that students are on site and walking through the school gates by 8:30am. Meeting and exchanging news with friends before school is important for the children's social development. Lateness causes problems over register marking and missed instructions. Where a genuine reason for lateness exists, this will be an authorised absence but where explanations are inadequate or the lateness is after 9:00am then an unauthorised absence (U) will be recorded.

### **What we are aiming for**

Average attendance would be around 96% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 98%.

### **What is considered as poor attendance?**

Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the Department for Education (DfE). In this school we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 96%. We monitor attendance and students will track their attendance in their planners weekly. At the end of the first half term we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 92% and issue a Stage 1 letter. We then monitor these students' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken weeks developing.

### **What Can Families Do?**

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school and themselves. Start building this habit from the day they start in Year 7 and continue this throughout their time with us so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in school, 6<sup>th</sup> Form and in their further study and careers.

What you can do:

- **Avoid scheduling holidays in term time.** They are considered unauthorised absences.
- **Build regular routines** for bedtime and in the morning.
- **Support your child to prepare** what they need for school the night before
- **Talk about the importance of regular attendance** and about how your child feels about school.
- **Don't permit missing school** unless your child is truly sick. Use a thermometer to check for a fever.  
Remember that stomach aches and headaches may be signs of anxiety.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, **talk to us or other parents** for advice on how to make him/her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- **Avoid medical appointments when school is in session**

### **What will the School Do to support you?**

Only send a child home if they are truly poorly – it's important once you have made the decision to send them to school that they stay in school unless sick. Students will be advised to have a drink, have some food, get some fresh air and keep going unless presenting that they cannot complete the day. We would encourage all students to be resilient in their approach and self-regulate the need to find someone if not well. We are trying to prepare them for the world of work.

We hope that this information will help you to have a clear understanding about the School's expectations with regards to student attendance. Thank you for your ongoing support and should you have any questions about this or any other school related issue then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully



Mitch Trainor  
**Deputy Headteacher**