



BBy/esk  
4<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Parents

## **Attendance and punctuality**

I am writing to thank you for your continued support in helping us to achieve such a positive start to the year with regard to attendance and punctuality. Last year was our best year yet, with an overall school attendance figure of 95.4% - well above the national average. We are currently up on last year's overall attendance figure already and there are fewer incidents of lateness in the morning.

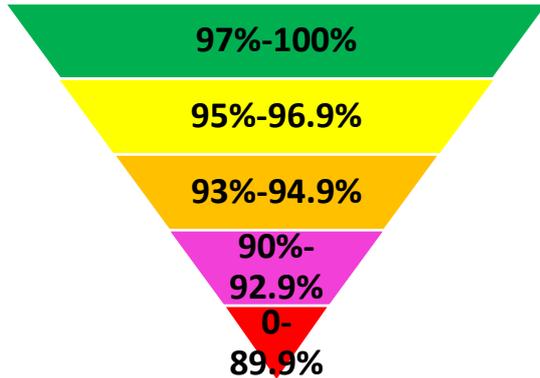
Following on from this, I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of some of the systems we have in place to promote excellent attendance and punctuality. I am sure you are aware that **the Department for Education has 'raised the bar' in terms of what constitutes acceptable attendance. Again, this year, a student with less than 90% attendance over the course of the year is deemed to be 'persistently absent'**. The government rightly feels that schools need to intervene with students earlier. Consequently we have placed a greater onus on employing a range of interventions to help prevent students falling below the 90% threshold. The evidence to support the tightening of legislation provides worrying reading; of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve five A\* to C GCSEs including English and maths. **Clearly there is a link between absence and attainment, and as a school we need to be robust in our approach.**

Students have been informed about the attendance pyramid (see next page) which we have adopted since September last year. **Our target for all students is a minimum of 97% attendance (equivalent to a maximum of 6 academic days of absence per year).** Every week, students will be informed about their current position on the pyramid.

- Students who are in the Yellow category (95% - 96.9% attendance) should expect to have a conversation with their tutor.
- When students fall into the Orange (93% - 94.9%) or Pink (90% - 92.9%) categories, the Head of House will speak to students.
- Red category students (89% or lower attendance) will be spoken to by a member of the Attendance Team such as the Attendance Manager or Education Welfare Officer.

The students spoken to will have supportive conversations where reasons for absence will be explored and a positive target for the remainder of the year will be discussed. On most occasions the tutor will be talking to students about a period of illness, however on some occasions there may be patterns emerging about regular days of absence which need to be challenged. Please do not be alarmed if a member of staff speaks to your daughter about attendance. As you can see this is an approach that we are adopting to support all students to achieve our 97% target. Understandably parents may feel that it may be too early to speak to students below the 97% at this time of the year - particularly if they have had a day of absence due to illness in September which skews the overall attendance. I would therefore like to reiterate that the **conversations are supportive in nature and are not a sanction**. In addition, we need students to become familiar with the new attendance procedures.

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Key	
Green	= no risk
Yellow	= risk of underachievement
Amber	= serious risk of underachievement
Pink	= severe risk of underachievement
Red	= extreme risk of underachievement

We follow NHS guidance when deciding whether to authorise absence, and would advise that you read the information provided at the link below in order to assist you in making a decision about whether you should be sending your daughter to school if you are not sure. <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Yourchildatschool/Pages/Illness.aspx>

For instance:

- **Headache.** A child with a minor headache doesn't usually need to be kept off school. If the headache is more severe or is accompanied by other symptoms, such as raised temperature or drowsiness, then keep the child off school and consult your GP.
- **Sore throat.** A sore throat alone doesn't have to keep a child from school. But if it's accompanied by a raised temperature, your child should stay at home.
- **Raised temperature.** If your child has a raised temperature, they shouldn't attend school. They can return 24 hours after they start to feel better.

Regarding lateness in the morning, **we expect all students to be on the school site by 8.15 a.m. every morning.** Registration begins at 8.20 a.m. and the first lesson starts at 8.25 am.

- Students who miss registration need to report to the main reception before going to their first lesson.
- After lessons 1 and 2 (after 10.25 a.m.) late students need to report to staff corridor outside the main office to discuss reasons behind being late.

On rare occasions school buses are late, which cannot be helped. However, for all other occasions we ask for your support in taking all the necessary steps to ensure that your daughter arrives on time. If students are regularly late, a Head of House detention will be arranged.

**I would like to thank you in advance for your support and understanding with regard to this matter. We will continue to reward students for excellent attendance and provide additional incentives to support individuals.**

**The Tutor Consultation afternoon on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October** will provide opportunities to explore your daughter's attendance if you wish to discuss individual difficulties in more depth.

Yours sincerely

**Mr B Burley**  
Assistant Headteacher