



Thursday, 11 May 2023

Dear parents and carers,

Now that we are nearing the end of this academic year, I would like to personally take this opportunity to thank all of you who have continued to support The Sittingbourne School's attendance agenda, particularly over the course of the last few months where typical seasonal illnesses have posed a significant challenge to the resilience of your child(ren). As we move towards the summer holidays, hopefully there will be less sickness and people will experience improved physical and mental wellbeing.

We are now consistent with other Trust school policies in reference to periods of isolation following sickness. Previously, parents/carers were informed to keep their child(ren) at home for a minimum of 24 hours after the last sickness from a vomiting bug and 48 hours for diarrhoea. **This regulation has now been omitted** and students are encouraged to attend school again the moment they are feeling well enough to engage in learning. The main reason for the change is due to concerns about a high proportion of students having considerable gaps in their learning, especially from interruptions to education in recent years resulting from the coronavirus pandemic.

Students with attendance less than 90% are categorised to be persistently absent by the government. At present, too many students fall into this category and are missing on average at least half a day a week, which needs to change. Failing to improve persistent absence can lead to prosecution, which we want to help families avoid. No school or local authority wants to take legal action, therefore every attempt to resolve concerns and improve a child's attendance will be made before any formal action is considered.

Promoting high levels of attendance and taking action where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence is a school priority.

Below are a list of reminders for enhancing your child's attendance and progress:

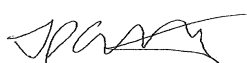
- If your child is unwell and you are unsure whether to send them to school, contact the school to seek advice.
- **Do NOT take any holidays during term times.**
- Keep up to date with what percentage attendance your child has, so that you know if they are at risk of falling behind.

- If you have concerns, make contact with the relevant year group team.
- Know the routines of the school day to avoid issues.
- Talk regularly with your child about school and how they feel about it. They are more likely to attend school if they feel supported and that their anxieties are being listened to.
- Praise, reward and encourage good attendance.

To incentivise attendance further within the next 2 months, a fully funded tenpin bowling outing has been proposed for a date in mid July at The Light complex for 80 students (20 in each year group from 7 to 10). Therefore if your child(ren) would like to be eligible for this, it is important that they continue to arrive at school every day on time. On this note, punctuality remains paramount to ensuring good outcomes. Pupils who arrive late to school are not only losing out on their learning, but also are disrupting the learning of others. We want to help families get their child to school on time, however, I do recognise that public transport issues are often responsible for lateness. Students will not be issued with a detention if their bus arrives late to school.

Once again, thank you for your ongoing support with attendance and punctuality.

Yours sincerely,



Mr J Crowsley
Assistant Headteacher
Attendance and Wellbeing