

Friday, 5 January 2024

Dear parents and carers,

I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas and on behalf of The Sittingbourne School, I wish you all the best for 2024. Hopefully your child/ren have settled back into their normal school routines now after returning early in January.


A key component of the school's drive to improve attendance is to communicate regularly with families, which is why you were notified on the attendance percentage for your child(ren) at the end of last term. This is something I feel duty bound to carry out, as attendance is a key priority for the school in an attempt to ensure positive outcomes and wellbeing, therefore your collective support is very much needed. As a reminder, we have a **target of 96% attendance** for all of our students by the end of each academic year to reduce the likelihood of them falling behind in their studies.

As the Attendance Lead for the school, I am tasked with analysing data and trends. There are two areas of concern in particular that I want to bring to your attention. Firstly, Friday attendance is considerably lower for all year groups compared to other weekdays. If you are noticing a pattern where your child/ren is/are absent on Fridays due to tiredness or mild illness, please encourage them to be resilient, as this is a character trait the school promotes for our young people to better equip them for the future, particularly in the workplace.

Secondly, I wanted to share with you research statistics from the Missing Children, Missing Grades report conducted by the Children's Commissioner in November 2023, with particular reference to taking holidays during school term times. Students who had **missed 3-5 days** of school over a two year period due to being on holiday were approximately **10% less likely** to achieve 5 GCSEs including English and Mathematics, with the percentage drastically decreasing further with increasing absence. Although I recognise that holidays are cheaper during term time, please consider the detrimental impact this could have on student outcomes, therefore opportunities for further education and employment.

As always, your support in promoting positive attitudes to school attendance is appreciated and if you have any concerns regarding the absence figure for your child(ren), please make contact with the Attendance Team or relevant year group team.

Yours sincerely



Jason Crowsley
Assistant Headteacher (Strategic Attendance Lead)