

The Marches School
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Our ref: TJW/ajl



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Dear Parent /Carer

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The Government states that school attendance below 95% is unsatisfactory. To underline the importance placed on excellent school attendance the Department for Education has decided that students with less than 90% attendance will now be classed as Persistent Non-Attenders, thus attracting the attention of the Education Welfare Officer.

It is clear that any absence from school, other than planned educational activities, will affect a young person's academic achievement and will have a negative effect on life chances. Whenever we look at students who are failing to achieve their potential there is always a link with poor attendance. Once students have fallen behind, catching up can be very difficult (sometimes impossible) and absence in the later years of education always affects exam results and can cause problems with references for colleges, universities, employers etc.

I therefore wish to take this opportunity to remind all Parents/Carers of the following:

- Lessons begin at 0840 prompt. We ask that all students arrive at 0830 to avoid them starting their first lesson late. Students who are 'dropped off' at 0840 on a daily basis will be late to their lesson and therefore late for the start of school. This is unacceptable and disrupts the learning of those who have arrived punctually.
- Last/First Day of Term, Non-Uniform Days or 'Off-Timetable' days such as the Remembrance Day Commemoration are full curriculum days with content that is required by the national curriculum, even if this is not obvious to students. It is unacceptable, and against the law, to keep students off on such days for any reason other than illness that renders a student too ill to attend. Any absence on days such as these will be unauthorised automatically unless medical evidence is received, or prior agreement has been reached with school.
- Please leave a message on each day of absence. It is for school to decide if an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Stating 'Unwell' or 'Poorly' gives insufficient information for us to make that decision and the absence will be unauthorised.
- Please phone daily unless you have made arrangements with your child's Progress Leader or the Attendance Officer. We do not know if you have sent your child to school and need to know this in order to keep them safe. If we receive no message we will endeavour to make a phone call home, but we must have at least two up-to-date emergency contact numbers on record to be able to do this.



- We have adopted a pragmatic approach towards the authorisation of Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances where other schools have imposed blanket bans. Mrs Pearson considers every case personally and may ask for additional information such as a letter from employers confirming inability to take holiday during the school holidays. Taking Leave of Absence in Term Time without authorisation is illegal and phoning-in daily, stating a student is unwell, causes a breakdown in trust between home and school.

We understand that the majority of parents and carers support us fully in terms of ensuring their children attend school regularly, and that you may have received this message on more than one occasion. However, we share this letter with all as it is important that we all understand the legal responsibilities the school has to uphold if we are to avoid any misunderstanding.

If you wish to respond to this letter please do so in writing to allow us to deal with your comments most effectively.

Yours sincerely

T J Whitworth

T J Whitworth
Deputy Headteacher Learning