



Dear Parents/Carers



Attendance to school is always an important focus for us and we would like to thank those students who have made such a positive start to 2024 with positive attendance - last week 1058 students had 100% attendance to school. This week, despite the challenges with the weather, we have seen a significant effort from our whole school community around attendance and we would like to thank everyone for their support.



We know that students make the best progress when they are in school with us each day accessing their learning. This message is currently being reinforced by the government with their latest campaign which has featured heavily in the media over the past week.

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**



At the start of this new year we would like to take the opportunity to refresh our expectations around attendance so that we can work together to achieve the very best outcomes for all of our students.



Our school target is a minimum of 96% attendance to school. Students who fall below this figure are monitored by their pastoral team. If attendance drops below this, you may receive a letter home to inform you that we have concerns.



If a student's attendance falls below 90% they are considered to be persistently absent. 90% may sound like a positive figure however in terms of attendance this equates to a half day absence each week –over the course of a school career this could equate to half a year of learning lost.



There are a number of steps that you can take to support with your child achieving positive attendance:



- Encourage your child to try their best to attend every day – they should only stay at home if they are genuinely too ill to attend or if there is a serious unavoidable situation. Minor illnesses such as a headache/stomach ache can improve during a day so staying home could result in avoidable lost learning. There is very clear guidance on illness and school attendance available here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>



- If your child is going to be absent please make sure that someone has made contact with school to explain the reason. You should contact school on 01942 814122 Option 1 or send a synergy message to explain your child's absence. You can expect that school staff may want to visit your child at home if the absence continues or if they have had a pattern of absence.

- Ask for help rather than allowing your child to stay away from school. If they are finding something difficult or overwhelming it is important that you talk to someone so that we can support. Staff will be able to discuss your concerns and work on a solution with you. It may feel easier for them to stay at home but this will impact on their learning and often problems can be sorted easily and quickly.



You can contact your child's pastoral team directly using the details below:

Year 7 - Mrs Aaron (SSL) Mr Hancock (SPL) Y7pastoralteam@westhoughton-high.org

Year 8 - Miss Swift (SSL) and Mrs Wharton (SPL) Y8pastoralteam@westhoughton-high.org



Year 9 - Mrs Whittle-Darroch (SSL) and Mrs Stocks (SPL) Y9pastoralteam@westhoughton-high.org

Year 10 - Ms Walsh (SSL) and Mr Barwise (SPL) Y10pastoraleam@westhoughton-high.org



Year 11 - Mr Shaw (SSL) and Miss Hill (SPL) Y11pastoralteam@westhoughton-high.org

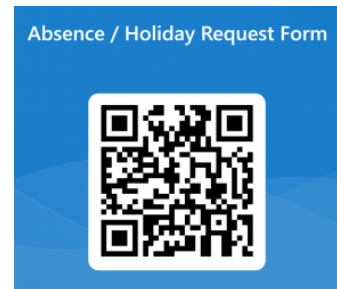
• Try to book appointments for outside the school day. If your child does have to attend an appointment try to minimise the amount of time they are out of school – consider if they can come in for lessons before their appointment and/or come back to school afterwards.



• Prioritise students being on time in the morning – tutor time is very important for key messages and support. If students arrive at school after registration their attendance will be recorded as 'U' which is classed as an unauthorised absence.



• Avoid taking holidays during term time. Term-time absence will only ever be authorised by school in exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absences could result in a fixed penalty fine and any time away from school impacts on learning. All requests for term time absence should be completed on our online form which can be accessed via this QR code:



There is also additional information on school attendance to be found on our school website <https://www.westhoughton-high.org/absence-attendance/> and you can contact our attendance officer Mrs Foster who will be happy to help with any enquiries.



We routinely offer weekly and termly attendance prizes and recognition but as an added incentive for the start of the new term we are running our 'Spring into Spring' campaign starting Monday 22nd January. Please discuss this with your child and encourage them to work hard to be part of the prize draws.



Thank you for your support. Please do not hesitate to contact the teams in school if you need any further information or if we can help in any way.

Kind regards

Mrs C Unsworth
Deputy Headteacher

