

15 July 2020

Dear Parent / Carer,

Attendance for September

As we move forward towards our 'new normal', I would like to thank you for your continued support in helping us to support your child with their learning over the last few months which have undoubtedly been challenging for everyone, in at least some small way.

We will be implementing additional academic support to ensure any critical gaps in learning as a result of the lockdown are identified and learning from this point forward is accelerated to ensure that they meet their potential. There will be different mechanisms for emotional support and wellbeing and this means it is extremely important for your child to attend school regularly.

Legislation regarding school attendance

From September 2020 the Government will be reinstating the legislation relating to school attendance which means that attendance at school will be mandatory. This means that all children of compulsory school age will be expected to attend school, unless they are unable to do so due to exceptional reasons. The local authority's powers to fine parents will also be reinstated for unauthorised absence from school where:

- There is persistent absence from school
- Holidays are taken during term time
- Children are unable to attend school due to quarantines on return from holidays abroad

The reinstated law and regulations state parents must ensure their child attends school regularly and they are committing an offence if they fail to do so.

I am sure you will agree, given the amount of school time students have missed this year, it is even more important that absence is kept to a minimum and holidays or events are arranged for outside of the school term time.

What does this mean in practice?

As a Trust, we are committed to ensure the wellbeing of our staff and students so that they are able to return to school safe and well in September. We have prepared a plan to create a safe return to school that will be added to or amended over the summer break as further guidance becomes available. If your child is worried about coming back to school in September and you feel they may need more support please do contact us to discuss your child's needs, as soon as possible, as 'prevention is better than cure'. Schools will be able to offer direct support or engage with other agencies where appropriate.

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For those students who have been ‘shielding’, the advice to shield is pausing on 1st August 2020, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission. This means shielded students can also return to school even though they remain on the ‘shielded patient’ list; as can those who have family members who are currently shielding. However, where your child is under the care of a specialist health professional, you should discuss any concerns you have about a return to school as a matter of some urgency before the start of the new term. . If their clinician advises continued shielding, this would need to be put in writing and shared with us to make alternative education arrangements.

What can you do to help?

Confidence to return

The biggest and most helpful thing you can do for your child is help them to feel comfortable about returning to school. Talking to your child and helping them to understand the importance of returning to a normality that means they continue learning and restart their social lives will make them feel more confident about the future.

Routines

It is likely that daily routines during the lockdown period have been disrupted so we advise you to start implementing a “normal” school routine over the summer break so that 7am alarms and longer days of concentration do not come as too much of a shock in September.

Reading

Being able to read confidently and use a varied vocabulary is always important and particularly as we return to school from the enforced lockdown. Please do encourage a period of time each day for your child to read a book – libraries have now reopened and there is a virtual library on the DMA website that your child can “borrow” from.

We hope that the above information assists you to make good choices in respect of your child’s return to full time education in September and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and safe summer break.

Thank you for your continued support of your child’s education – we are looking forward to working with you in the new academic year.

Yours faithfully



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Deputy Headteacher

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