

10 March 2023

Dear Parent/Carer

It is a well-known fact that good ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY are essential attributes to have that reflects an individual's commitment to learning and work. Research shows that good school attendance impacts upon student's success within their learning. So in simple terms, it will help students achieve those important qualifications, especially English and Mathematics. The benefits of gaining GCSE English and Mathematics (minimum grade 4) or a Level 2 Functional Skills in English and Mathematics could be the difference between:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Getting a job or not | Getting a promotion or not |
| More likely to get into college and even university | Better health and a longer lifespan |
| Positive impact on mental health | Improving communication & understanding the world |
| Getting more £ per year (minimum of £2000 more.....£100 000 whilst working) | |

The School Governors have made it clear that they will support Sandwell Community School in promoting high levels of ATTENDANCE and PUNCTUALITY, and support SCS in taking action where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence. An attendance printout is included with this letter.

Our target is for every student to achieve 95% and above. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. The reverse of this letter, outlines the approach we are following and how Sandwell Community School will continue to manage attendance. **I WOULD LIKE TO REMIND ALL PARENTS THAT SCHOOL BEGINS AT 9:00AM AND ALL STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO REGISTER AT THIS TIME WITHIN THEIR FORM ROOM. FAILURE TO DO THIS COULD RESULT IN AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE MARK WITHIN THE REGISTER WHICH CAN LEAD TO PROSECUTION.** A breakfast club is available before 9am.

Sandwell Community School is committed to supporting parents in helping their children achieve and attend school. If you feel you need any support or would like to discuss your child's attendance, please direct all your questions to their form tutor in the first instance.

◆◆NEW◆◆ - Consultation Event

SCS will be holding a Parent/Carer consultation event on Monday 27 March 2023 2.45pm-6pm, where you will have an opportunity to discuss your sons/daughters progress at SCS. Students will be finishing at 2pm to allow for us to prepare for parent arrivals. Furthermore, I would like to invite them to join you at the consultation. You will be contacted next week to book a convenient time to discuss progress with their subject teachers and form tutor.

◆◆Reminder◆◆ - Uniform

Thank you for your support with uniform. As a REMINDER students are expected to wear black trousers or black skirt (knee length), plain white shirt or polo, plain black jumper/sweatshirt and black footwear. Appropriate is key here, so NO leggings, NO crop tops, NO hoodies and DEFINITELY NO Jeans. We will monitor this carefully and liaise with you if this is not being adhered to. Students not appropriately dressed will be asked to return home to get changed. As always let us know if there are uniform issues, so we can work together to solve these.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Morgan
Executive Headteacher



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EXECUTIVE HEADTEACHER: Mr Kevin Morgan

School Attendance Information

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as either authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Unacceptable Reasons

The following are **NOT** acceptable:

- > shopping visits
- > care for family members
- > parental illness
- > days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- > parents' work commitments or business trips
- > holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)

Illness and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 9.00am. It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information we have a duty of care to contact you so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure.

Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. However, if we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the School Health Service.

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents provide proof and come to the Office to collect/drop off their children. Medical and dental appointments will be authorised once proof is received.

Emergency Occasions

There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs and mark accordingly.

Lateness

The Pupil Registration Regulations state that pupils should be registered at the start of the school day and once during the afternoon session. Please ensure that your child arrives to school on time so they are present for registration; this takes place in their tutor room at **9.00 am** each morning and following lunch in the afternoon. Failure to attend registration could result in a detention after school on the same day. Where a genuine reason for lateness exists this will be authorised using a present "L" code however where explanations are inadequate or the lateness is after **9.20 a.m** an unauthorised late code "U" will be recorded this could lead to prosecution.

What is considered as poor attendance?

Anything below **94%** is weak, under **90%** is poor and if attendance dips below **85%** we will have serious concerns. Below **90%** is regarded as persistent absence by the DfE (department for education). At Sandwell Community School we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least **95%**.

Our duty of care in responding to unauthorised and persistent absence – possible consequences

We have a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low and where there are invalid reasons (judged by school, not parents) for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents condone absence (e.g. by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays) then parents render themselves liable to a fine of £60 per pupil per parent if paid within 21 days of issue. This fine doubles to £120 per parent per child if paid between 21 and 28 days. If not paid after 28 days the case will be referred to court - section 444(1), where a fine of up to £2500 or even a prison sentence could be imposed. Of course, no one wants this to happen but we need to be very clear about the issue. We hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding about SCS's expectations in this matter.

