

Our Ref: RH/JD/Att

14th February 2019

Dear Parents

St Bede's Academy is committed to providing an excellent education for all students and this is achieved by having high expectations in all aspects of education. I do feel that it is necessary to provide clarification to all parents regarding student's attendance and punctuality. It is without doubt that attendance is linked to progress and in 2016 the Department for Education released the following:

- 79% of students nationally who had 100% attendance achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C.
- 69% of students nationally who had between 99% and 95% achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C.
- Just 36% of students nationally which had attendance of less than 90% achieved 5 or more GCSEs at A*-C.

With this clear link between attendance and outcomes I would like to clarify our position on attendance and punctuality:

1. Punctuality

Students are expected to be in school by 8:40am. This enables them to be in classrooms ready to learn by 8:45pm. A number of students, many of whom are being dropped off, arrive after this time.

2. Medical appointments

It is our expectation that the vast majority of medical appointments should be made outside of school time. Routine GP and dentist appointments should not be made during the school day. This is supported by the NHS. The school will not authorise such absences. If a hospital consultation occurs during the school day we would ask that appointment letters are brought into school. Students who attend medical consultations during the day are expected into school afterwards. Students should arrive to get their morning mark and return to school after the appointment.

3. Illness

I would ask that in the cases of illness you use a similar standard to that of the world of work. If a student is not able to attend school due to genuine illness then please contact the school on each day of absence. A common cold or sore throat is not a suitable reason for absence and we would not use this as an excuse in the world of work. In cases where we believe there to be excessive periods of absence or patterns to absence then we will request medical evidence.

4. Holidays and exceptional circumstances

These will usually not be authorised. The Academy can authorise holidays and other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Headteacher. However, they are reviewed on their individual circumstances.

In order to safeguard students and promote greater progress the Academy will ring parents and query absences. Where we have concerns we may conduct home visits to ensure that students are genuinely ill. We also work very closely with the local authority and where we believe that students are absent from school without good reason we will issue fines and, in exceptional circumstances, seek prosecution.

The large majority of students at St Bede's have very good attendance and should not be concerned by the contents of this letter. Most students are achieving 95% attendance or above and this will have positive impact upon their progress. It is important to note that the Academy strives for 100% attendance although 95% attendance is a trigger of concern. Attendance should not dip below 95% unless in exceptional cases. If a student is absent for 10% or more of the school year they risk becoming a persistent absentee. In these cases the school will take necessary steps to ensure absence improves.

If you would like clarification on any of the above then please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr R Hibbard
Headteacher