Cranborne Middle School

A Specialist School

Headteacher: Mr C Watson
Deputy Headteacher: Mr M Parker

9 January 2017

Dear parent/carer,

Information for all parents and carers on the importance of attendance and the attendance process.

At Cranborne Middle, we are proud of our pupils' attendance record, which was recognised in our recent Ofsted report as '**better than the national average for many years**'. Nonetheless, in line with government expectations, we have a responsibility – along with children, parents and everyone who is part of the school community – to ensure that we maintain overall attendance of at least 95%, and we have a duty to monitor children's attendance and keep it under review.

Regular school attendance is essential for all students to progress and achieve their potential, giving them better chances in life. There are 190 school days each year, leaving 175 days away from school at weekends or in school holidays. If your child achieves 95% attendance they will have missed less than ten days of school or fifty lessons. The impact of further absence from school is significant:

- 90% attendance = four weeks absent or 100 lessons missed
- 80% attendance = seven and a half weeks absent or 175 lessons missed

Over five school years, this could equate to:

- 85-90% attendance = about half a year off school.
- 80% attendance = one whole school year missed.

Furthermore, evidence suggests that significant absence from school eventually impacts on children's GCSE results. Of pupils with less than 90% attendance, only 35% achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including Maths and English, while 73% of children with attendance of at least 95% achieve this.

We understand that children are unwell from time to time and that there can be exceptional circumstances for absences, but we ask that you think carefully before keeping your child off school.

We hope that you appreciate how important good school attendance is to your child's progress and we look forward to working with you to ensure that your child's attendance is the best it can be to help give them the best start in life.

For further support for you or your child, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Year Leader.

Yours sincerely,

Mr C Watson
Headteacher

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Information for Parents
Attendance Statement

It is essential that children and young people form good habits of regular attendance at school from an early age and that good attendance is maintained throughout their time at school. Cranborne Middle School is committed to working together with children, parents, carers and families to ensure that there is a consistent approach to school attendance. It is a legal requirement that all children should attend their educational provision and it is the parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure that their children attend school.

Cranborne Middle School has agreed the following:

- Cranborne Middle School will monitor the attendance of pupils and work closely with Dorset County Council's School Attendance Service to support children and young people whose attendance levels are causing concern.
- Whilst we understand that children do become ill on occasions, children who lose a lot of time at school can suffer in the long term from significant gaps in their learning. If a child's health continues to affect their education, schools are obliged to make a referral to School Health to ensure that appropriate medical advice and support is provided.
- If a child is ill it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that they inform the school. Cranborne Middle School operates a targeted "First Day Call" system, which means someone from school will contact parents/carers to ask why your child is not in school and when they are expected to return. Notifications can be made by telephone call, e-mail or via ParentMail. All absences are required to be followed up in writing on your child's return to school.
- No Leave of Absence will be granted during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. Where possible, we would also ask you to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours, or so that your child can attend the full school day.
- Should you wish to take your child out of school for any leave of absence, holidays or otherwise, requests will not be routinely granted. It is essential that any requests for leave of absence are made in writing. Any absence which has not been authorised will be recorded as "unauthorised" and this has the potential to impact on your child's overall absence figure and could result in legal action.
- If there are concerns about a child's attendance, someone from school will discuss these concerns with his/her parents/carers and provide appropriate support. If this does not result in improvement, an attendance panel meeting can be convened, involving representatives of the Dorset County Council School Attendance Service. The purpose of such a meeting is to discuss a child's attendance and seek solutions to any problems. It can recommend several outcomes, including further monitoring, issuing a £60 Penalty Notice, a Parenting Order or prosecution, which can result in a fine of up to £2,500.
- It is important that pupils are in school on time. Time keeping is not only important in obtaining maximum benefit from education it is also a key skill for adult life. Lateness is monitored and contributes to absence rates.

Cranborne Middle School is committed to ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to thrive and achieve, and recognises that good attendance is central to this.

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