



Cranborne Middle School



Headteacher: Mr R Stevens
Assistant Headteachers: Mrs R Cain & Mr S Gillott

Wednesday 2nd February 2022

Information on the importance of attendance and the attendance process

Dear parents and carers,

At Cranborne Middle School, we are committed to ensuring the best for our learners and working together with parents and carers to promote good attendance. We have systems in place to work with families when attendance drops below an acceptable level.

The last two years have been so disrupted with lock downs and Covid cases, making it harder to maintain our usual approach to monitoring attendance and contacting families where we have concerns. Sending out letters to families where we know the absence is due to Covid would make no sense at all. However, we are also aware that there are attendance issues that need to be addressed that are not linked to the pandemic and this is our reason for writing to you at this time.

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. 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 sixty lessons.

The impact of further absence from school is significant:

Attendance	Learning missed in 1 year	Learning missed in 5 years
90%	4 weeks absent / 120 lessons missed	20 weeks absent / half a year missed
80%	8 weeks absent / 240 lessons missed	40 weeks absent / a full year missed

Research undertaken by the Department for Education (DfE) shows the high correlation between pupil attendance and their GCSE outcomes, where significant absence from school has a negative impact on children's progress.

- Of pupils with **less than 90% attendance**, only 35% achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including Maths and English
- Of pupils with **absence over 50%**, only 3% manage to achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C including maths and English
- 73% of pupils who have **over 95% attendance** achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C

Key points:

- Cranborne Middle School will monitor the attendance of pupils and work closely with Dorset 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.

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- 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. It is essential that any such requests are made in writing. Any absence which has not been authorised by the Headteacher 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.
- 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.
- 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 arrive to 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 recorded and contributes to absence rates.

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. We will be contacting families where attendance is below 90% by letter the week beginning 14th February.

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

Yours sincerely,

Mr R Stevens
Headteacher

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