



26th January 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to highlight the importance of good attendance to school, but I must start by congratulating our students for the positive attitude they have shown at the start of the new spring term. It is worth celebrating some key points:

- 170 students brought their work to our PROUD event last week. It was wonderful to see such pride in their learning!
- Over 100 Year 11 students came to after-school English and after-school Maths last week. This dedication to their studies will make a difference to the summer outcomes and I know that they will also take up the online 'Sunday School' revision led by NET subject directors and starting on 4th February.
- Student leadership has been in the spotlight, with our Student Voice committees electing their chairs and our sports leaders helping to run the primary indoor athletics events.

Moments matter, attendance counts

You may have seen in the news that improving attendance to school is a national priority. Here at Denton, we are about to launch a number of new strategies to help ensure that all students have good attendance to school. It is important to emphasise just how much of a difference that good attendance will make to the life chances of your child – moments matter in every lesson. It also has a positive impact on their well-being.

Attendance: the top facts to know & share

MOMENTS MATTER. ATTENDANCE COUNTS.

The link between attendance and attainment is clear:

- In 2018/19, **just 40% of persistently absent (PA) children in KS2 achieved expected KS2 standards**, compared with 84% of pupils who were regular attenders.
- And **36% of PA children in KS4 got 9 to 4 in their English and maths GCSEs**, also compared with 84% of regular attenders.¹

And it's never too late to benefit from good attendance:

- **More than half (54%) of pupils who were PA in Year 10 and then rarely absent in Year 11, passed at least 5 GCSEs**, compared to 36% of pupils who were persistently absent in both years.²

But attendance is important for more than just attainment:

- Regular school attendance can facilitate **positive peer relationships**, which is a **protective factor for mental health and wellbeing**.³

1: The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4. Academic year 2018/19 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)
2: Missing Children, Missing Grades | Children's Commissioner for England (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)
3: Mental Health and Attendance at School (Chapter 1) - Mental Health and Attendance at School (cambridge.org)

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We have already begun to make changes. Our first step has been to introduce a phone call home for all students who are late to school. Students who are late disturb the learning of their classmates, which I am sure you will agree is unacceptable, and they miss out on key knowledge themselves. Parents have a duty to ensure their children arrives to school on time but I know that often you send your child to school in good time and may not be aware if your child has chosen to turn up late. These phone calls are designed to ensure that information is shared quickly and the home-school partnership is strengthened. It has already had a positive impact, with a 42% reduction in the time of the average late arrival. This is on top of additional staff presence in the community – you may have seen us on Crown Point, working with local shops to ensure students are on time.

Our next step is to implement the full Northern Education Trust attendance strategy, and we have joined a Department of Education 'Attendance Hub' project. This work will be led by Mr Day and Mr Mackreth and will cover three main strands:

- **A significantly enhanced morning response to absence.** This will include faster phone calls, more staff, home visits to collect children and a strong response where students could be in school but aren't. I am also looking at how we can improve our phone system so you can contact school more easily – I acknowledge this has been a frustration.
- **A revamped system of tackling persistent absence.** We will work with parents proactively and have a suite of attendance improvement plans. We expect that any students who are persistently absent will improve their attendance swiftly.
- **A new system to celebrate and reward good attendance.** The majority of our students turn up every day and do their very best in school. I believe this is something we should praise and, in highlighting those who attend well, I hope that others will be keen to improve too. I am looking forward to being able to share news of BRAG and 'in it to win it' with you soon.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school?](#) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Denton Community College, we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

What YOU must do:

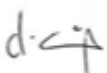
- ✓ Try to telephone the school before 8.30am each day of your child's absence.
- ✓ Tell the school in advance, of any medical appointments and bring in appointment cards/letters.
- ✓ If you are not sure whether your child is well enough to attend school, send them in anyway as they often perk up on arrival.
- ✓ Have a backup plan for if your child misses transport, call on a family member, neighbour or friend.
- ✓ If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance then talk to us as a first step so we can help!

What WE will do:

- ✓ Check your child's attendance every day.
- ✓ Phone home to discuss your child's attendance with you.
- ✓ Invite you into school for attendance meetings if we are concerned.
- ✓ If we cannot establish a reason for absence, then we may make a welfare home visit.

I would ask that you work with us to ensure that your child attends school every day, unless it is unavoidable. Moments matter and every day of attendance counts.

Yours sincerely,



Mr D Cumming
Acting Headteacher