

September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

Welcome Back – A Strong Start to the New Academic Year

We are delighted to welcome all of our scholars back after the summer holidays. We hope you have had a restful and enjoyable break. As we begin this new academic year, we are excited about the opportunities ahead and are committed to ensuring that every child achieves their full potential.

One of the most important factors in helping our scholars succeed at school is **regular and punctual attendance**. There is a clear and well-evidenced link between good attendance and strong academic outcomes. Put simply, children who attend school regularly are more likely to enjoy their learning, make better progress and achieve higher grades.

Why Attendance Matters

Every day in school matters. Even a few days of absence can cause scholars to fall behind. For example, a two-week family holiday during term time would mean that your child has missed 50 hours of well-constructed learning that they will never be taught again but will face questions on in an exam in the future. Having broken attendance (a day off here or there) interrupts the carefully thought-out sequence of learning resulting in future lessons being much harder for your child than other children in their class.

Research carried out by the Department for Education shows that scholars with the highest attendance throughout their time in school go on to gain the best GCSE results. Their research found that children who performed better, both at the end of primary and secondary school, missed fewer days than those who didn't perform as well. The two most significant outcomes of their research were:

- Scholars with attendance above 95% are almost twice as likely to achieve strong outcomes in English and Maths than those whose attendance was between 90% and 95%.
- Scholars with attendance above 95% are 3 times more likely to achieve strong outcomes in English and Maths than those whose attendance was between 85% and 90%.

The link between attendance, attainment and the progress of scholars is beyond doubt. It is for this reason that the law states:

- Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children receive a full-time education and regularly attend school.
- Parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to make sure that their child attends school regularly.

Absence & Contacting School

We understand that children may occasionally be unwell, but absence should only occur when absolutely necessary. If your child is absent, it is your responsibility to inform the school on the first day and every day thereafter, providing a reason for the absence. You can do this by:

- Sending a message via MCAS.

- Phoning the school on 01226 272000 then selecting the option for the attendance office.

Should contact not be made, the attendance team will send messages and make phone calls to establish reasons for absence. Our team will routinely make home visits as part of their work if a scholar is absent from school. This is a crucial aspect of their role in order to enquire about the wellbeing of scholars and to support in getting them back to school.

We also know that children sometimes need to attend medical or other appointments. However, we ask that these appointments are arranged outside of school hours whenever possible. Where this is unavoidable, scholars should attend school before and/or after the appointment to minimise lost learning time. If your child does need to leave school during the day for an appointment, please inform the school in advance and provide a copy of the appointment letter/card or confirmation message where possible. You can do this by:

- Visiting the attendance office.
- Emailing attendanceteam@astreanetherwood.org

Our Staged Absence Response

To support good attendance, we operate a rigorous attendance monitoring and family support system, called the Staged Absence Response. Our intention is to work with parents and carers to support them in their statutory duty of ensuring their children attend school regularly.

At each stage of our absence response, we will operate a graduated approach to interventions dependent upon the need of the scholar. Should we not see a satisfactory improvement in attendance, there is a possibility that the decision will be made to pursue legal enforcement via the Local Authority as set out by the Department for Education. The decision to proceed to a penalty notice is a last resort, but sometimes a necessary measure to improve school attendance. Please remember that **holidays during term time will not be authorised**, and unauthorised absences may also lead to a penalty notice being issued.

By way of a reminder, following updated guidance in August 2024, only two penalty notices can be issued in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period:

- The first time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days of issue to the Local Authority. The fine will be reduced by the Local Authority to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- The second time a penalty notice is issued for term time leave or irregular attendance, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days of issue to the Local Authority.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years of the date of issue of the first. Instead, the case will be presented at the Magistrate's court. A Magistrate's fine can be up to £2500 per parent, per child.

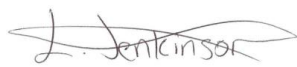
For further information on this, please follow the link to see the Local Authority Code of Conduct:

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/barnsley-education-welfare-service/useful-education-welfare-resources/>

Working Together

We are here to help and want every scholar to have a successful year. If you are experiencing any difficulties that may affect your child's attendance, please speak with us so we can offer appropriate support. Strong attendance is a shared responsibility. Together, we can give your child the very best start to the year, laying the foundations for their future success.

Thank you for your continued support.



Luke Jenkinson | Assistant Principal – Attendance