

Our Ref: SAF/kmd/attendance

February 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Moments Matter, Attendance Counts

This Spring, the Department for Education is launching a national campaign to remind schools, parents and carers of the importance of school attendance. The campaign strapline is **“Moments Matter, Attendance Counts”**.

Improving school attendance is everyone’s business and to tackle the challenge we face we need to work together. Face-to-face education is important in helping pupils to fulfil their potential. During school time we believe pupils should be in class with their teachers and peers and enjoying all the benefits that brings. Parents or carers of a child have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives a suitable education, this is achieved through regular attendance at school.

The link between attendance and attainment is clear. In a recent study, 36% of persistently absent children in KS4 got a grade 9-4 in their English and Maths GCSEs, compared with 84% of regular attenders. It’s never too late to benefit from good attendance or to recover from previous poor attendance. In the same study, more than half (54%) of pupils who were persistently absent 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.

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.

How can I support my child’s attendance?

Members of the Attendance Action Alliance have worked with the Department for Education to develop this short guide which helps parents understand how they can work with their school and local authority to support their children to attend school and get the right support. Please take the time to look over the document to see what you can do to support your child’s attendance:

[DfE external document template \(childrenscommissioner.gov.uk\)](#)

When can my child be absent from school?

The NHS and the Chief Medical Officer say it is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses, including general cold symptoms like a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. The following link offers some guidance to help if you are not sure whether to send your child to school if they are presenting as poorly, or asking not to go:

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

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When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly. This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance.
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?

You should contact us as early as possible to explain why. All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent. Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable. As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday. If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

Where can I get support to help my child attend school?

Children may struggle to attend school for a wide range of reasons. If your child is struggling to attend school, both their school and your local authority also have responsibilities to help you to support your child's attendance. In most cases, if your child's attendance level is falling we, as a school, will contact you to explore the reasons and discuss what help can be put in place to help you overcome the barriers they are facing. You may also hear from Mrs Chafer, the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

If your child is struggling to attend school, you can expect us to ask to meet with you and your child. We will want to understand the reasons for their absence and what support you or they need to overcome the barriers to attendance they are experiencing. If the barriers to your child's attendance are in school – such as they are having friendship problems – we will work with you to help overcome the issues.

If the barriers to attendance you or your child are facing go beyond the school – such as a transport or a mental health issue – both the school and local authority will help you. This includes helping you to access the wider support you might need, for example from the school nurse or from local housing or transport teams.

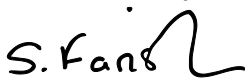
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Oldbury Wells attendance drive month

For the first 4 weeks after the February half term, the school having a focus on improving attendance figures in every year group. Having spoken to students, as an incentive for pupils to focus on attendance, the year group with the best attendance figures after the 4 weeks period (19th Feb -15th March) will have a non-uniform day on the last day of term before the Easter break. In addition to this, the tutor group in school with the highest attendance will also be invited to celebrate with the rest of their form group on the last lesson of term.

Thank you for your support in promoting good attendance for all students and sharing the important messages within his letter.

Yours faithfully



Mr S Farish

Assistant Headteacher – KS4 behaviour and Standards

