

October 2021

Dear Parents and Carers,

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

Budmouth Academy is pleased to be able to provide some detail about our expectations for pupil attendance for the forthcoming academic year. Please be assured that whilst we will be sympathetic with families with genuine concerns over COVID19, it is expected that all children should regularly attend school. 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.

Clearly, both families and schools are continuing to operate in challenging circumstances at present. We urge you to talk to and work with us so that we are able to work together to ensure that your child enjoys full attendance and participation in school, and that you are able to be reassured for their well-being. All schools are working hard to promote good attendance and have common systems in place to work with families when attendance drops below an acceptable level.

We are always grateful to parents and carers that stay in regular contact with us if their child is absent from school – thank you. If a child is ill, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that they inform the school on the first day of absence and on any subsequent days away from school. Budmouth Academy operate a targeted “First Day Contact” system, which means we will contact you to ask why your child is not in school and when they are expected to return.

You will be aware of the importance of good school attendance in improving a young person's chance of success in life and establishing positive attitudes to life-long learning. As such, no leave of absence will be granted during term time including holidays, except in exceptional circumstances. There is clear evidence of the link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Of pupils who have less than 90% attendance, only 35% achieve five or more GCSEs at Grade 9 to 4 including Maths and English, but 73% of pupils who have attendance of 95% or more will achieve this.

If a child has an attendance level of 90% they will have missed one day a fortnight in school. Over a school year this will represent four weeks of absence. If this level of absence were maintained for a five year period it would mean half a school year would have been missed.

Here at Budmouth Academy, we are determined to ensure that all our students have the opportunity to achieve success and have an excellent record of attendance. Where there is cause for concern parents will be contacted and the child's attendance will be closely monitored. When attendance improves, monitoring will continue and, if it falls, the attendance process will be resumed. The school is obliged to inform the Dorset Council (DC) School Attendance Service if the school's concerns persist or continue to grow. If attendance does not improve sufficiently, the parents will be invited to an Attendance Meeting or Inclusion Panel. This meeting is an opportunity for the school, family and a representative from DC's School Attendance Service to meet together to discuss why your child has such a high absence rate and seek solutions to any problems.

The Inclusion Panel can recommend several outcomes, which can include; a further period of close monitoring with specified targets for attendance; issuing a £60 Penalty Notice, a Parenting Order or seeking prosecution which could result in a fine of up to £1,000. This information is being presented to make parents aware of the process. We constantly work in the hope that an Attendance Meeting or Inclusion Panel will not be needed; that all pupils will have a good record of attendance, are happy and successful and benefit from their time in school.

If you have concerns about your child's attendance please contact their Tutor in the first instance. For more serious concerns, please consider contacting your child's Head of School.

Yours sincerely,

Mr P Midworth
Vice Principal