Worthington Primary School

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“We Only Reach for The Highest”

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Tuesday 6th September 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome back one and all. I do hope you and your children had a very enjoyable summer. It was wonderful to see all the children return yesterday - they certainly have settled very quickly into the routines of the school day.

Routines have been very much in my mind lately as I have worked a great deal over the summer break trying to measure the result of the national lockdowns on the academic progress of our children.

I am delighted to say that for those children who have had superb attendance since our return from lockdown, all have progressed at least in line with age expectations and the vast majority have made incredible progress. For these children, Covid has had very little impact.

Unfortunately, the impact of the national lockdowns has been felt most acutely by those children whose attendance fell below 95%, or worse still for those with 90% or even lower attendance.

The simple fact of the matter is that the more your child attends, the greater their rate of progress and learning – something we all want to see.

With the above in mind, I am asking for your support in improving whole school attendance and punctuality. During the Covid pandemic it was necessary for pupils and families to isolate if they or a close contact tested positive. That is not now the case and it is essential that we build back up on our previous extremely positive attendance rates.

The impact upon children’s education through lost learning is huge. At a time when so much education has been disrupted it is vital that we make every school minute count. I urge you to ensure that your child is in school and on time every day to prevent anyone falling behind with their learning.

Government departments track school attendance figures. It is considered that attendance of 90% or below is ‘persistent absence’ which then is closely monitored by school staff. Failing to improve on this 90% can lead to prosecution, which school want to help families avoid.

Year on year, our annual whole school attendance figure has regularly hovered around 97% (which is extremely good). Last year our whole school attendance was only 94.4%. I recognise that some parents may have been wary about Covid infection, and we still did have children who caught the virus and needed extended periods off school; there will always be legitimate reasons for absence.

There are things you can do to improve your child’s attendance and avoid falling into the persistent absence category:

* if your child is unwell and you are unsure whether to send them to school, contact the office to seek advice on 0161 973 3504;
* do not take any holidays during term times;
* speak to school staff with any concerns;
* talk to your child about the importance of them being in school and let them know how important you feel it is.

The table below provides an example of the impact of lost learning through pupil absence:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Attendance % over a school year | Equal to number of days absent | Converted to approximate weeks of absence | School Concern Level |
| 95% | 9.5 | 2 | Pupil can catch up and still succeed |
| 90% | 19 | 4 | Poor attendance – we are very concerned |
| 80% | 38 | 8 | Serious concerns |

Punctuality is also highly important. Pupils who arrive late to school are not only losing learning, as lessons begin immediately. Pupils do not like being late into school and we witness how upsetting it can be for them. We want to prevent this.

The table below provides an example of the impact of lost learning through pupil lateness.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of minutes late per day over a school year | Approximate equivalent number of days lost learning |
| 5 | 3 |
| 10 | 6.5 |
| 15 | 10 |
| 20 | 13 |

We want to help families get their child to school on time. Here are some things you can try:

* have everything you/your child needs for school prepared the night before;
* ensure that your child goes to bed reasonably so they are not too tired to get up in the morning;
* ensure your child has a good night’s sleep by minimising their use of devices at bed time;
* have a consistent bedtime routine for your child;
* set an alarm to allow plenty of time for your morning routine in getting to school on time;
* bring your child to school so that he/she is entering their classroom as the school bell rings at 8.55am.

Lost learning is compounded if your child has a high absence rate and does not arrive at school on time. For example, if you take two weeks holiday during term time, your child has two weeks of illness throughout the year and regularly arrives ten minutes late, they will miss 26.5 days (just over five weeks) of learning a year. This level of absence makes it impossible for any child to keep up.

Now, at the start of a brand new academic year, is the time to make a change if change is required - I know we can make improvements to attendance and punctuality if we all work together.

Yours sincerely



Mr Searle