



September 2023

Headteacher - Patrick Earnshaw

Dear Parents and Carers

Deputy Headteacher - Mathew Downs

Highcliffe School is committed to working together with parents and carers to support our students and their families. All schools work hard to promote good attendance and have common systems in place to work with families when attendance drops below an acceptable level.

We are very grateful for your commitment as parents and carers to ensuring your child attends school. While we certainly do not expect you to be dragging a seriously unwell child out of bed on a school day just to achieve a present mark, we do value the effort you make in ensuring they come to school even when they have minor sniffles, feel a bit under the weather, or really would rather stay in bed on a cold winter's day! Turning up at school every day on time, even when you would maybe rather not, helps lay down the mentality needed to succeed as an adult in the world of work.

More importantly for your child's immediate future, there is clear evidence of the link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Of students who have less than 90% attendance, only 35% achieve five or more GCSEs at 9-5 including Maths and English, but 73% of students 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.

At Highcliffe School, we are determined to ensure that all our students have the opportunity to achieve success by having an excellent record of attendance. Highcliffe School gives all students the target of at least 97% attendance and students are regularly commended for their good attendance as an encouragement to them. As part of our attendance policy, you will be notified when your son/daughter's attendance drops below 95% and you will be invited to school to discuss any concerns should attendance drop below 90%. We will always seek to work with you to support your son or daughter if their attendance is causing a problem, to bring about improvement.

We would hope that by working together we would be able to bring about improvement in your child's attendance; however, should this not be the case, we would be obliged to report your child's attendance to the School Inclusion Service at BCP Council. At this point, you would be invited to a Fast Track to Attendance meeting in school. If you are required to attend the Fast Track to Attendance meeting, there are several possible outcomes which could be recommended, which may include a penalty notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. You will be advised of this and other courses of action at the meeting.

This process is designed to identify poor attendees quickly and address the issues that are affecting attendance. When attendance improves, monitoring will continue and if it falls, the process will be resumed.

We always hope that a Fast Track to Attendance meeting will not be required for any student and that all students will achieve their potential, are happy, successful and benefit fully from their time at Highcliffe.

Yours faithfully

Mr P Earnshaw
Headteacher