

Attendance

Dear Parent/Carer

We are all living through difficult times and having to adjust and change our normal routines. That said, at John Whitgift Academy we are proud to say that every measure to protect your child during the Covid-19 pandemic has been adopted, enabling your child to remain as safe as possible and yet continue learning. For that, I must express my gratitude to you as parents and carers for your positive response and support.

However, I must continue to state the importance of excellent attendance and would like to share with you the systems we have in place to track and monitor those students with poor attendance. We are also aware, that many parents/carers will be receiving this letter who do ensure their child(ren) attend school every day, but wanted to make sure we are all aware. ***It is also important to mention, that the Secretary of State: Gavin Williamson, made it clear, that from September upon our return after lockdown, attendance was statutory for all students.***

Step 1 - Every morning, the attendance team work diligently taking calls and checking the emails received from the parents of children that are absent on any one given day.

Step 2 – We call those we have not heard from and will challenge any we believe should be attending

Step 3 – Every student within the academy is placed within a RAG system: **Red**, **Amber** and **Green**. This rating denotes the following:

- **Green** – All students with attendance above 95%, the minimum expected for all those wishing to maximise the best outcomes at GCSE
- **Amber** – Students with attendance below 94% to 90%. Monitored to ensure absence does not worsen and is likely to be invited in for an initial meeting to discuss concerns.
- **Red** – The most concerning category, for those with attendance less than 90%. Legally known at PA – **Persistent Absentees**. (*This excludes children with known medical illnesses*). For students that fall within this category, the academy is legally obliged to start official proceedings including: meetings, setting targets and if all else fails; prosecution.

As Principal, my team and I are always willing to work with students and their families when genuine concerns arise, as they do in life. However, there is a growing number of students that have too many 'odd days' off school that inevitably hinder their success at GCSE. **As we fast approach the winter season, general sniffles and ailments arise as they have done for centuries, we simply battle forward and do not confuse general health issues with the current pandemic.**

Further strategies are to be put in place to celebrate and reward the majority of students that attend way above 95%, as they rightly deserve. Equally, as an academy, we intend to tighten measures in order to process far quicker those that fall below 90% without due reason.

Kind regards

Mr R Spendlow (**Principal**)