

Dear Parent/ Carer,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the Senior Pastoral Leader here at The Suthers School. I have worked for many years in education, more recently as Head of Year 11 at the Minster School in Southwell and have lots of experience in this field. My role is to ensure that all students are able to access their learning without any barriers; providing advice and guidance to support them to achieve and thrive at The Suthers School, whilst feeling happy and safe. One of my responsibilities, is to oversee Attendance and Punctuality. I will be working closely with the Pastoral Team, Attendance Officer, as well as Senior Leaders and Heads of Subjects to support our students.

There are a few reminders I would like to draw your attention to as we start this new academic year, in particular to our school Attendance Policy, which can be found on our school website.

The Suthers School places great importance on attendance and punctuality. It has been proven through numerous studies that students who have good attendance achieve well and develop important social skills. The Suthers School expects that students will have **at least 98% attendance**.

We are grateful for the support from all parents and carers to ensure your child attends school regularly. However, frequent absence is a serious problem for some students. Much of the work they miss is never made up, leaving these students at a significant disadvantage for the remainder of their school career, and potentially having a detrimental impact of their choices available to them once they leave school.

Students are registered electronically and if a student is absent without explanation, automatic texts will be sent to parents / carers. This is an important part of our Safeguarding procedure within school. To avoid any mistakes, good communication is vital.

The school has a clear set of procedures to monitor attendance. The government classifies any student with an attendance rate of **less than 90% as 'persistently absent'**. Should a child's **attendance fall persistently below 95%**, a series of letters will be sent out and different procedures put into place.

Stage 1 – there is a **general concern** about your child's attendance, this letter is designed to alert you to this, and the effects absence has on your child's education.

Stage 2 – This means your child's attendance is **becoming a greater concern**. Further absences will not be authorised unless the school receives medical evidence. (eg. copy of a prescription or doctor's note.)

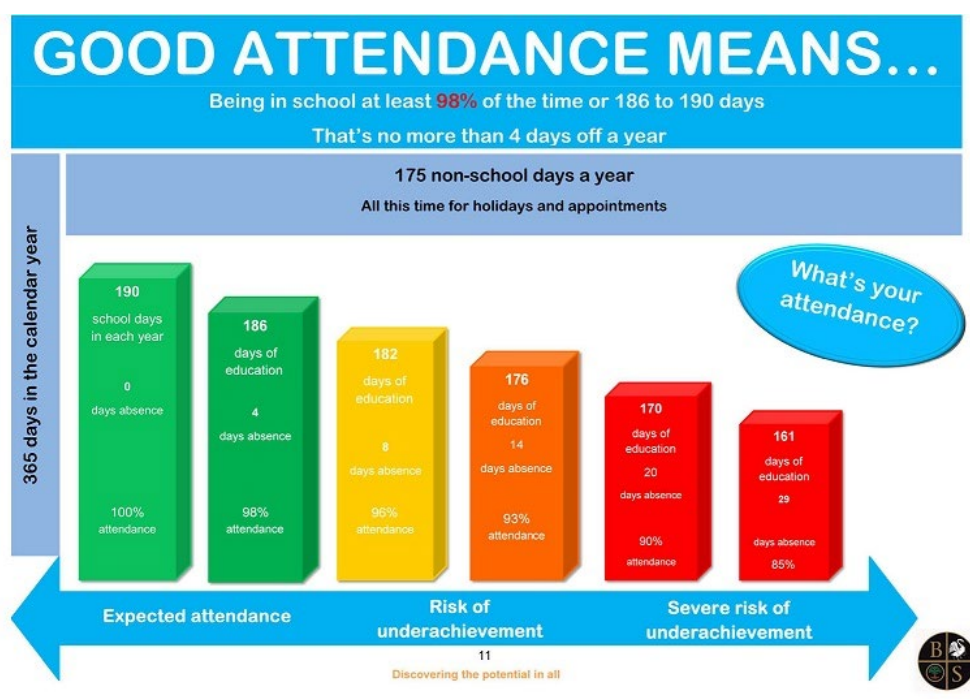
At any stage you may be invited in to meet with the Attendance Officer and/or myself as Senior Pastoral Leader to discuss and develop targets and support plans.

Description	Attendance	Whole Days Lost	Lost Hours of Learning
Excellent	100 – 99%	0 – 2	0 – 10
Good	98 – 96.5%	4 – 7.5	20 – 37.5
Requires Improvement	96 – 91%	9.5 – 17	47.5 – 85
Persistent Absence	90 – 86%	19 – 27	95 – 135
Critical	85 – 80%	28.5 – 38	142.5 – 190

A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued if parents/carers fail to attend these meetings. Cases, which move beyond 'Stage 2', will trigger Local Authority Proceedings. Please remember an attendance rate of

- 90% equates to one day of absence per fortnight.
- 95% equates to ten days every school year.

This is considerable and in the world of work, employers would be concerned about such a figure. We realise that some students do have genuine illnesses and medical conditions, and the school will do whatever it can to support these students. However, good communication is always the key, and I would encourage you to contact your child's Pastoral Leader if you have any concerns.



Sometimes illness cannot be avoided but we kindly ask for your support before your child is absent from school. When deciding whether your child is too unwell to attend school, please ask yourself the following questions:

- Is my child well enough to do the activities of the school day?
- Does my child have a condition that could be passed on to other children or school staff?
- Would I take a day off if I had this condition?

We ask that you consider carefully before keeping your child from school for medical reasons. If they wake up saying they are unwell, please consider whether the symptoms really mean they have to stay at home. Please do not keep your child away from school 'just in case' when they could be in school, learning in lessons and socialising with their friends.

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If however your child should feel genuinely unwell, parents/carers need to contact the school office by telephone, text or e-mail at their earliest opportunity – preferably before 9am. The school must be informed each day thereafter. Please ensure the school is contacted about any absences. If school is not notified of the reason for the absence, it will be recorded as an **‘unauthorised absence’**.

Punctuality

Students are expected to be punctual to school every day. The school day begins at 8.30am and students are expected to be on the premises by 8.25am. Students will be issued with a 15-minute break time detention on the same day for lateness and if they are late twice a week it will be a lunch time detention. Exceptions are made for the school bus arriving late. Persistent lateness will lead to further sanctions.

Remember, every minute counts. **If a child is just ten minutes late every day, this equates to nearly seven days of absence from lessons over a school year.**

Medical Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange appointments outside of school hours, or at the beginning or end of the day to limit the amount of lessons / learning missed. If this is not possible, for example orthodontist, dental check-ups, or hospital appointments, we ask that a note is put in your child's planner 48hrs in advance and show proof of the appointment i.e. the appointment card, NHS text or letter should be shown to either their Tutor, Pastoral Leader or Mrs Barnes – Attendance Officer.

Leave Of Absence From School (Namely Holidays in Term Time)

We are very aware that last year many families took the opportunity to go on holiday during term time as previous holidays had been cancelled due to COVID. However, The Suthers School feel this time has now passed. The school DOES NOT encourage any leave of absence to be taken during term time. We recognise that holidays can be much cheaper during term time and that work commitments can make taking holidays during school breaks difficult, but doing this can be disruptive and detrimental to both children's learning and the school. The government has issued strict guidelines to schools regarding leave of absence for students. Under these guidelines, Head teachers are not able to grant leave of absence for students during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances' and please be advised there are very few exceptions. Should parents/carers wish to seek leave of absence for their child, please contact the Attendance Officer to request a Leave of Absence Request Form. Each case will be considered on its merits. The Head teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Where authorisation is not granted and any subsequent term time holiday is taken, then we are under a duty to report the absence as a matter of course to Nottingham County Council Education Welfare Service, and we will support the imposition of the relevant fixed penalty fine.

I want to support all our students in school, together with the Pastoral Leaders each assigned to their particular Year Group. If you have any worries or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact either me direct or the Pastoral Leader for the Year Group of your child, details of which will be found in their planner and on previous correspondence.

Kind regards and take care,

Mrs Wendy Redmond
Senior Pastoral Leader