

September 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

The 2022/23 Academic Year and Ensuring Excellent Attendance For All

Welcome back to another school year - I hope the beginning of term has been smooth for you and your child. I trust will be a positive and successful one for every single young person across STAR, whatever their age.

That of course is our endeavour for our young people; that we will:

- Ensure that our children achieve the best possible outcomes
- Develop the whole child; personally, culturally and spiritually
- Be inclusive; have a particular commitment to our most vulnerable children
- Teach our children to live well together and to make wise choices
- Ensure that our children are safe from harm
- Work to ensure that our schools are enjoyable places for children to learn

I am writing to you early in the year on a matter which can sometimes be contentious but ultimately has been proven through countless research studies including the evidence across the nation from the pandemic - *our young people are best served by being in school on time each and every day* unless there are significant and agreed reasons to prevent this.

From this term, there is [new guidance in place for schools from the DfE](#) which at STAR we have integrated into school policy which you will receive later this half-term.

The new policy details:-

- Clear timings and expectations with regard arrivals at school, first day contact in the event of absence and what 'being late' constitutes
- How your school will look to positively support good attendance
- How your school will support any student or family where attendance is a concern
- That leave of absence for holiday in term-time, under any terms, is no longer considered an exceptional circumstance and therefore cannot be authorised. (The DfE are looking at default Penalty Notices for any holiday leave taken without authorisation)

These are not Trust or school level decisions but implementation of national strategy and as a Trust our wish to be fully transparent with you.

In July 2022 national attendance was as low as 86% primary and 77% secondary (adjusted for exam cohorts). Whilst in STAR we may not have reached these levels, without a doubt there is a significant need to rebuild attendance to pre-pandemic levels and to ensure every single day, every single session counts.

We will not be able to truly deliver on our vision without *your* help to ensure every student has exemplary attendance and punctuality this academic year OR where there are complications then please talk to us and we will support each individual case.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Yapp

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