

Wednesday 12th October 2022

Dear Parents & Carers,

Firstly, we would like to thank all those parents and carers who have continued to support the school and ensured that their child has engaged with school as fully and as positively as possible, it is very much appreciated. As we emerge from the impact of the pandemic, it is more important than ever that we secure the best possible outcomes for our students.

The research is clear:

The higher the overall absence rate of a student across secondary school, the lower the likely level of attainment at GCSE level and thus the negative impact on possible next steps in education, employment or training.

Students with **no absence** are 2.2 times more likely to achieve **5 or more** GCSEs grades 4- 9 (or equivalent qualifications such as BTEC) including English and Maths than students that missed just 2 days of school in a month.

We understand that students get ill, and it has been especially challenging with Covid – however, it is imperative that parents and families work with school to build the resilience of our students to increase attendance. We are not suggesting that those students who are clearly far too unwell are sent to school, rather we are referring to those students who are informing you that they have minor ailments. The impact of what are called ‘broken-weeks’ (whereby a child might miss 1 or 2 days of schools in a week, but on a regular basis), can have a significant impact on students not only academically, but also socially and emotionally. For example, **1 day a week absence is the equivalent of 6 weeks off school in the one academic year, 2 days off per week is the equivalent of 3 months off the academic year** – these figures can make it almost impossible for students to catch up with their contemporaries, let alone make progress.

All students are given advice through PSHE (Personal Social & Health Education) on good self-care – including healthy eating, good sleep routines and self-management. We will also be rewarding those students who have good attendance, as well as those who take significant steps to improve their attendance over a sustained period of time such as from now until the end of the academic year.

Here at SGS Forest, we aim to build on the positive partnerships we have developed with so many of the families in our community and as such, tutors will contact parents of those students who attendance is starting to cause concern to see what can be done support yourself and your child. For those with more significant attendance concerns, deputy Heads of House and Heads of House, will be contacting home with a view to developing an attendance action plan with the family and with advice from the Education Inclusion Department.

FHS Attendance Thresholds & Actions

% Attendance Threshold	RAG Status	Action	Next steps	Impact
95%+		Tutor house points for individual students	Attendance certificates & rewards	Recognition of student engagement in school community
85% - 94.9%		Tutor makes contact home	Identify actions to support and improve attendance with parents – tutor monitoring	Attendance improves for the individual student
<85%		If tutor contact has not had an impact on % attendance. HoH/dHoH invites parent/carer in for attendance meeting	Identify actions to support and improve attendance with parents – dHoH /HoH monitoring Attendance meeting with EWO	Attendance improves for the individual student
<70%		If dHoH / HoH interventions exhausted, then student is added to persistent absentee list	Phone call home & home visit to identify barriers to coming into school	Creation of action plan

We appreciate that there is a lot of information in this letter, but we also want to be clear in our communication with families and ensure that we all work together for the benefit of the children in our care.

Many thanks for your continued support and co-operation

Rachel Edwards
Deputy Headteacher