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Dear Parent / Carer

Attending school is essential for students to make good progress, achieve their academic potential and consequently have better chances in life. Every student in line with government expectations is expected to maintain a high level of attendance. At Campion School students should have 97% attendance or higher. It is therefore concerning that after making a strong start, recently a number of students have been absent and in the school's opinion, unnecessarily. For example on or after days that have been wet. Clearly it is important that young people learn to be resilient. As adults, we can help them to become more resilient by encouraging them to get on with school in the face of minor adversity.

The school will happily provide you with the current percentage attendance of your child. In addition your child writes their percentage attendance for the current academic year in their school planner each week.

It is the belief of many educationalists that missed time from school is detrimental to student education. Below are examples of how attendance is impacted upon by school absence.

Student attendance over one school year

98% attendance = approximately 4 days absent from school  
95% attendance = approximately 10 days absent from school  
90% attendance = approximately 4 weeks absent from school  
85% attendance = approximately 5 ½ weeks absent from school  
80% attendance = approximately 7 ½ weeks absent from school

Student attendance over 5 years (Years 7 – 11)

85- 90% attendance = similar to having half a year off school  
80% attendance = similar to having a whole year off school

Students that have below 90% attendance at the end of each half term are known as persistent absentees. This is bad, as it clearly shows a child is missing a lot of school and is therefore disadvantaged compared to students that have higher attendance. In addition, references for students that leave school with less than 90% attendance will show them as being persistently absent. All references must be factually correct and often ask what percentage attendance a

student has. The reference templates companies and colleges use don't always make explaining extenuating circumstances possible. Poor attendance does impact negatively upon references.

While some school absence is unavoidable, other absences should be avoided. The following examples are intended to help you to maximise your child's attendance and learning. The content is not intended to patronise and may or may not apply to your child. Please read and share this information with your child as you see fit.

- If a child has a minor ailment, they should still come to school. Where possible, school will make arrangements to support students that may not be feeling their best. Whilst in the first instance it is for parents to decide whether a child is well enough to attend school, the school asks that parents default position be that they send their child to school, unless it is clear that they are suffering what can only be described as a 'significant illness.' Coughs and colds cannot normally be considered 'significant illness.'
- Dentists and GP surgeries etc. are used to being asked for appointments outside of school hours. The school asks that parents / carers request appointments that do not clash with school time. If an appointment can only be made during school time, students should attend school whilst not at the appointment i.e. before / after as appropriate.
- The weather seems to influence some students in deciding if they wish to attend school or stay at home. On wet days, especially if it is raining as students leave home to come to school, it appears some students try to avoid a wet journey in, by making some plausible excuse to not face the weather. If you suspect that this may apply to your child, please impress upon them that unless the weather is so bad that the school is shut, they should be making every effort to attend school. Please ensure your child is equipped for travelling to and from school even if the weather is not ideal.
- The day after wet weather can also cause school to suffer reduced attendance. Some students do not take care to stay dry and do not attempt to dry their clothes / shoes when they get home. As a result their uniform is wet the next morning and they are delayed coming in or miss a whole day. Please advise your child on the importance of trying to stay dry and organising the drying out of wet clothes as soon as they get in from school. Advise your child that getting wet is not a reason to be off school.
- If a child attends a school trip or other activity the day before, the child must attend school at the normal time the next day. It is not acceptable to miss or be late for school due to being tired.
- Parents / carers should be mindful of the possibility that their child may wish to avoid school for a reason other than being ill. It can be easier for a child to tell a parent / carer that they are too ill to go to school, rather than explain that they have fallen out with a friend, haven't done their homework etc. If parents / carers feel their child is experiencing something that is reducing their willingness to attend school, please contact school to share your concern. As long as school are aware of the problem, the problem can often be solved.

## Reminder for Parents – Leave Of Absence during Term Time

As you will all be aware, current attendance regulations stipulate a Head teacher may not grant a leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

*Each application for a leave of absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.*

It is for the Head Teacher to decide what he/she views as 'exceptional' and it is at their discretion if the circumstances warrant the leave to be granted. If the leave is granted, the head teacher is able to determine the number of school days a child can be absent for.

The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent.

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child will be required to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, which may result in legal action being taken against the parent(s), by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Failure to make an application for leave in advance can also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).

Where a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and not paid within the required timeframe as set out on the notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal proceedings under S444 Education Act 1996.

Parents are asked to respect the new regulations under which the school must work and if there is a need to take a child out of school during term-time, an application or request must be made in advance and make clear how the circumstances are exceptional.

It is the responsibility of everyone in our school community – parents, students, staff and governors to ensure students have a high level of attendance at school. We constantly monitor pupil attendance and encourage you to monitor the attendance of your child. As mentioned above, your child records their attendance percentage in their school planner. They will be able to show you where they are recording it. It is important that you are aware of your child's percentage attendance so that you can encourage them appropriately. Please ensure your child knows you are monitoring their attendance and that you expect them to have as close to 100% attendance as possible.

Yours Faithfully



Andrew Morris

Assistant Headteacher