Exeter
a learning community

Thursday 17th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have made a positive start to the attendance this academic year and we would like to thank our pupils and families for helping to establish strong routines. Every day at school supports the children to do well.

Attendance Updates

The Department for Education has updated its statutory guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' for 2026. This guidance offers a 'support first' approach to attendance. Schools should identify concerns early, work with families and provide appropriate support and interventions to support attendance. There are also responsibilities on schools to monitor day-to-day attendance, monitor groups and to use national attendance codes.
In line with this, we have updated our Attendance Policy, which will be shared with parents and carers this term. The approach is split into three parts:

Tier 1	Universal support that applies to all families and children. This includes recognition and reward, maintaining high expectations and following school absence procedures such as first day phone calls home and home visits.
Tier 2	Further support may be needed where concerns continue. This may include a 'connections meeting', further pastoral support, SEND intervention or other meetings with the school or other professionals to discuss support.
Tier 3	This is for cases where there is a higher need or persistent or complex barriers. This will involve working with other agencies, including the local authority. Strategies in place will be highly personalized to individual children.

Punctuality

The school day starts at 8:35 am. Gates close at 8:45 am and registers are taken by 8:50 am. Children arriving after 9:15 am will receive an unauthorized mark for the session.

Reporting Absence

If your child is unwell due to unexpected circumstances, **please contact the school office by 9:30am**. This can be done via phone call to the office or a message on the MCAS app. We have a responsibility to account for all children who are absent therefore, if we do not hear from you, we will make phone calls home. If we cannot make contact, we will need to complete a home visit.

Medical Appointments

Wherever possible, please arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside the school day. If this is not possible, please notify the school in advance through the MCAS app and provide confirmation of the appointment, such as an appointment card, letter, text message or screenshot. Pupils should attend school before and after the appointment wherever practical and be absent only for the minimum time needed.

Illness

We recognize that there are times when children may be feeling unwell. It is important that in these cases children are absent only for the least time possible. NHS guidance, which can be found here: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school, gives more information on this.

We will not routinely ask for medical evidence, however there may be cases where we need to do so, such as where absences are prolonged or re-occurring. Medical evidence may include a prescription, evidence of an appointment or a discharge summary from the hospital.

To support children in returning to school following illness, we are able to administer prescription medication, which must be signed in via the school office.

Holidays

Please note, in line in Government guidance, family holidays are **not exceptional circumstances** and therefore they will not be authorised.

Barriers to Attending School

We recognise that due to a range of factors, sometimes, some children may find it hard to come to school. This may include worries about friendships, difficulties coming in each morning or anxiety about learning. These cases can feel upsetting, but in most cases, we can resolve these difficulties during the school day and they are not reason to miss school.

We also know that there are times when children might need more support to come to school. We have an experienced Wellbeing Team who are available to support with a range of interventions and who also have the expertise to identify other relevant services that may support your child. We can also offer morning plans to support the transition into school, including breakfast clubs our 'Welcome Wellbeing Club' and other bespoke support to ease the transition into school.

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The company number is 07698904 and is registered in England.

Please speak to your child's class teacher, phase leader or a member of the Wellbeing Team if you feel your child would benefit from any of these avenues of support.

A Support First Approach

We are keen to work with you to help remove any barriers to good attendance. Avenues of support can be reached through taking to your child's class teacher, phase leader or a member of the Wellbeing Team. We may also invite you into school to discuss any barriers to attendance your child may be facing if their attendance falls below expected levels. This will usually take the form of a 'connections meeting'. We encourage you to attend this meeting to look at ways that we can support your child(ren) to attend school, which may include looking at their strengths and interests to help them attend school.

When Does Attendance Become a Concern?

- **First Half - Term (Autumn 1):** Approximately **3.5 days** missed
- **Full Term (e.g., Autumn / around 2 half-terms):** Approximately **7 days** missed
- **Two Terms (Autumn & Spring term):** Approximately **12.5 to 13 days** missed
- **Full Academic Year: 19 days or more** missed (out of 190 days)

Promoting and Rewarding Attendance

Each week, we will recongise the 'Best Class Attendance' as well as our 'Attendance Stars'. We will also share initiatives throughout the year with you.

Thank you for working in partnership with us. We are keen to work with you so please reach out to us so that we can put in the right support.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Doherty

Co-Headteacher

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