

July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

School Attendance

Thank you for all you do to ensure your child(ren) attend(s) school. We appreciate the last two years have been especially challenging for everyone and that it has not always been easy to maintain regular patterns of school attendance.

Following a year of transition from September 2021, in which we have not had to close any of our schools for periods of lockdown or home learning, we are concerned to get things back to normal from September 2022. We are committed to working with parents to support good attendance.

You can help prevent your child missing school by:

- having a routine from an early age and sticking to it;
- making sure your child understands the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- making sure your child understands the possible implications for themselves and you as a parent if they do not go to school;
- taking an interest in their education - ask about their learning and encourage them to get involved in school activities;
- discussing any problems your child may have at school and letting their teacher know about anything that is causing concern;
- not letting them take time off school for minor ailments or holidays during term time;
- minimising disruption to your child's education by arranging (as far as possible), appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during the school holidays.

We appreciate many of you already do this and we have seen the impact of your actions in our schools. However, we also understand that parenting can occasionally be challenging. Therefore, we have a member of staff in each of our schools who can provide support and guidance, specifically with regard to attendance.

As you are aware school attendance is mandatory. Our Headteachers and their teams know that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe. Therefore, our schools rigorously follow up any absences to:

- ascertain the reason for a child not attending school;
- ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- identify whether the absence is approved or not.

All schools have a statutory responsibility to register school attendance twice a day. In the guidance provided for schools (May 2022) the government expects all schools to;

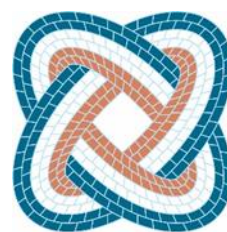
- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- act early to address patterns of absence;

parents to:

- perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly;

and all pupils to;

- be punctual to their lessons.



Good attendance at school is not just valuable, it is essential. There is a direct correlation between regular school attendance and positive progress and attainment. Children need to be in school to learn and frequent or prolonged absence can lead to significant gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Furthermore, the routines established in school, prepare pupils for life beyond school and the world of work.

Going to school helps to develop:

- friendships and reduce the risk of isolation;
- communication and social skills;
- life skills, such as punctuality and effective time management, and team values;
- healthy living and learning;
- resilience and strength of character;
- cultural awareness;
- aspirations and career pathways.

Across The Corinium Education Trust we share high expectations. Our new MIS, Arbor, will allow you to see your child's attendance in real time, once the parent portal is launched in the autumn term. While all of our schools expect 100% attendance, we define regular school attendance as attendance at or above 98%. This allows for a short period of illness.

In 2021-22, we have seen a dip in attendance across The Corinium Education Trust and, while our average attendance is just above the national averages for primary and secondary schools, we have concerns about the number of persistent absentees. A persistent absentee is a pupil who has less than 90% attendance. When this happens robust and supportive procedures are put in place to bring about improvement.

We appreciate that achieving 90% in an exam or test is a fantastic result. However, if your child is at school for only 90% of the school year, they will have missed 19 days, almost four whole weeks of school. For primary-age children, this can mean the loss of almost 120 guided learning hours. This is a big gap for any child to make up. If your child is a pupil at secondary school, 120 guided learning hours is the same as studying one full-time GCSE (normally taken over two years).

We are aware that 2021-22 has not been a typical year as we have all had to manage the legacy of the pandemic. We know school attendance has been impacted by the previous COVID-19 requirements for those testing positive to self-isolate initially for 10 then 7 and now 3 days. Hopefully, this will not be necessary in 2022-23 as we expect the situation to improve.

Please help us to continue to support and educate our pupils by ensuring your child regularly attends school. I remind you that Headteachers are unable to authorise any absence for a family holiday in term time.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Yours sincerely

Chiquita Henson
Chief Executive