



20th September 2021

**RE: Attendance Matters**

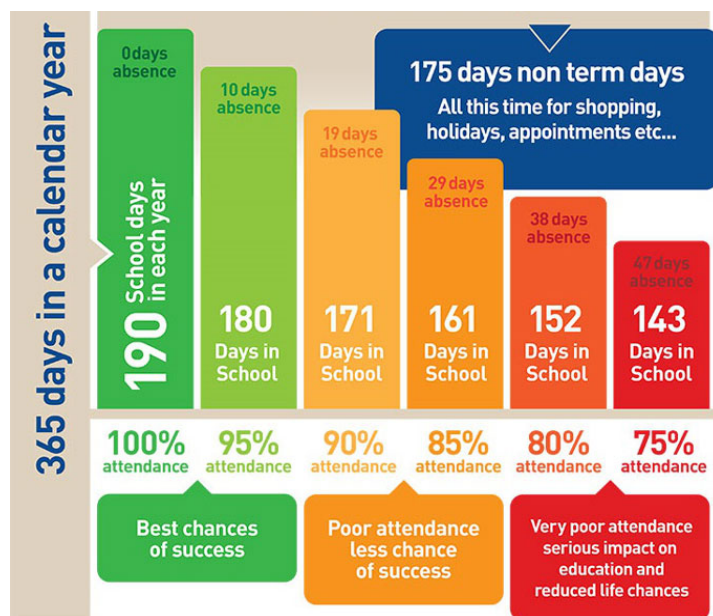
Dear Parents and Carers,

The last two academic years have been like no other and we are all hoping for a sense of “normality” to come this year.

We would like to reassure you that we have robust plans in place to ensure that all children and staff can return to school safely this academic year, which meet the requirements and guidance laid out by the government. Part of this guidance is that all children should be attending school and that it is the **legal obligation of parents to ensure that their children attend school**. The government continues to advise that the risk to children themselves becoming severely ill from coronavirus remains minimal.

**Regular Attendance:**

There is extensive research to support that regular attendance and attainment are well linked. At Jewell Academy, we set a target of 95% attendance.



Attendance is reviewed weekly by the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and reviewed regularly with BCP. In cases where attendance is causing concern, parents will be contacted and offered support.



Attendance which drops below 90% is considered “**Persistent Absence**”. If your child is considered “**Persistently Absent**” we would work with BCP to offer further support.

### **Punctuality:**

The school gates open from 8:30am. Early Bird Work is available for your children from this point. The gates close at 9am and if your child arrives after this time, then they will be considered late. Arriving anytime after 9:15am, and your child is reported as absent for the morning session.

It is very unsettling for any child to walk into a classroom after this time when the input for the lesson has already happened. It can be hard for them socially, emotionally and academically.

### **Reporting Absence:**

If your child is too ill to attend school, you must report it on the first day and every day of absence. Please call the office on 01202 774830 and use the absence reporting line. **This should be done by 9:30am daily.** If you need to speak to a member of the office team and the line is busy, please do leave a message. Messages are picked up and responded to frequently throughout the day.

If you fail to report absence and school is unable to make contact with you, we may attempt to carry out a home visit. Failure for us to establish contact may result in social services and/or the police to be called to carry out a safe and welfare check. This is statutory safeguarding. Please do not waste valuable resources and time by not reporting absence in a timely and daily manner.

### **Coronavirus Absence**

The guidance has recently changed regarding self isolation. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-and-treatment/when-to-self-isolate-and-what-to-do/>

If your child is experiencing any symptoms of coronavirus, **DO NOT** send them to school and arrange a PCR test for them.

Once PCR results are back in (positive or negative), we ask that a screen shot, clearly showing the child’s name and details is shared with the office team who can then advise you further.

If your child has to isolate for any reason, remote learning will be provided for them. We do not expect children to be working if they are ill.

### **Illness related absence:**

There are of course illnesses other than coronavirus that prevent your child from attending school.



If your child has experienced vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not attend school for a full 48 hours after the last episode.

Other childhood illnesses such as chicken pox will also require a period of absence. Further guidance can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

If you are in any doubt, the Office Team may be able to advise you further.

### **Medical Appointments:**

Your children have 13 weeks holiday per year. We respectfully request that any routine medical appointments such as dental and optician appointments are made outside of the school day.

For emergency or hospital appointments, we do ask that you provide proof of appointment by sharing paperwork with the office for them to copy and retain on file.

### **Requests for Term Time Absence:**

Following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration, England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect 1st September 2013, Headteachers and Principals are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In considering whether or not to authorise a request for exceptional leave of absence in term time, Headteachers and Principals will look at each individual case and only grant authorisation if the circumstances are truly exceptional.

Any request for absence should be made **prior** to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school using the 'Request for Leave of Absence form' (available from the School Office).

Parents/Carers will be asked to provide additional information/evidence or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances of the absence.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. 'Unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. As a general guide, the following indicates the type of scenarios that might be considered as 'exceptional':

- Immediate family member returning home from Service Duty
- Immediate family weddings or funerals (if abroad, only the actual day of the wedding or funeral will be granted)
- Occasions of religious observance



- Other situations where a 'compassionate' element is applicable

Generally, the following scenarios cannot be considered 'exceptional':

- Annual family holidays
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time
- Family birthdays or other events
- Parents' profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays

Following an application for term time absence, parents/carers will be notified of the Headteacher's or Principal's decision at the earliest opportunity. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional then the absence cannot be authorised and the school may need to request that the Local Authority issues a Fixed Penalty Notice. In considering whether to request a Penalty Notice, the school will have due regard to the latest version of the BCP Council 'Education Penalty Notice - Code of Conduct' (currently April 2019).

Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the academy for further information.

We look forward to a successful year at Jewell Academy where good attendance and punctuality are achieved by all pupils.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Alex Waddington  
Principal