

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am writing to the school community to highlight the very serious concerns held by the school leadership team and governing board about the rates of absence recorded at Newport School in the last and current academic years.

The government’s expectation is that children attend school at least 95% of the year, and the new trigger for Persistent Absence increased last year to 90% attendance. As a result there is now an extremely high number of pupils across the school who are identified as persistently absent.

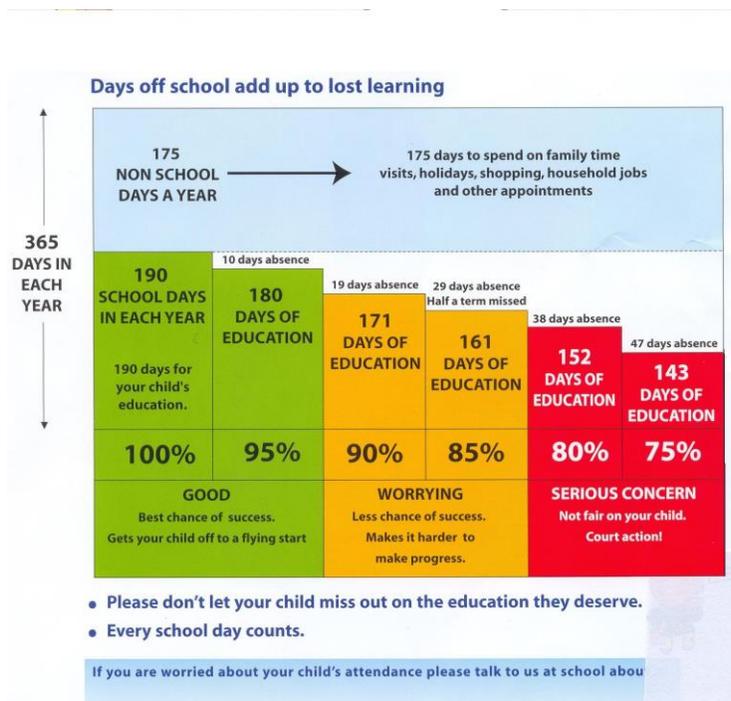
Research has evidenced the link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement:

- Of pupils who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve five A* to Cs, including English and maths
- **Of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve five A* to C GCSEs, including English and maths**
- Of pupils who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve 5 A* to Cs, including English and maths

Department for Education – Nick Gibb MP, 19th October 2011

“And it claims the same pattern can be seen at primary school level, where pupils missing up to 14 days of school in key stage 2 (ages seven to 11) are a quarter less likely to achieve level five or above in reading, writing or maths tests than those with no absence.”

The Guardian 22.2.2015



This research is reflected in the Newport School results for 2015-2016 which show that at KS2, only 50% of pupils who were persistently absent achieved the expected standard overall, as opposed to 74% of those with good attendance. The gap was particularly significant in maths: 67% for persistently absent children as opposed to 94% of others, showing the impact of missing key steps in learning.

We understand that from time to time all children will experience episodes of illness which prevent them from attending school. The school does however have a duty to follow up cases of frequent or significant periods of illness in order to support families in ensuring that children are able to receive their entitlement to education. This may involve referral to the school nurse or Early Help team or meetings with school leaders and governors. It is important that home and school work together to overcome any barriers to attendance so that children are able to have the greatest opportunity to achieve.

Please be reminded that the school will not authorise term time absences for holidays or visits to extended family abroad. Absence of this nature may result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice to parents/carers. Please note that in the event of extended absence, the school is required to inform the local authority who will register the child as a 'Child Missing Education'. Extended absence may also result in the loss of the child's school place.

As Chair of Governors, on behalf of the full board, I take this opportunity to remind parents/carers that; Newport staff, pupils, parents and governors are proud of the school's OfSTED rating of Outstanding. Every day staff, parents and pupils work very hard to make Newport School Outstanding but this work is undermined by pupil absence.

Many people do not realise absence directly impacts a school's OfSTED rating. An Outstanding school must evidence data to support the following statement:

'Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day at school ...The attendance of pupils who have previously had exceptionally high rates of absence is rising quickly towards the national average.' OfSTED School Inspection Handbook, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015>

Your child's education and opportunities to take advantage of all learning experiences are the school's highest priority; governors and school leaders are committed to ensuring that all children receive this entitlement. We look forward to working in partnership with families to promote very good rates of attendance and thank you in advance for your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Maria Meehan
Chair of Governors

