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Headteacher: Philip Davies

25 September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

We would like to remind you of our attendance procedures and expectations. Our minimum expectation for attendance is 95% across the year and we know that many students are already on course to achieve this and above. According to the Department for Education's guidelines, attendance of **below 90%** is classified as '**persistent absenteeism**'. **If your child's attendance falls below this figure, please note that no absences will be authorised for any reason, unless medical evidence (or other, as appropriate) is provided.**

90% attendance each school year may sound good, but this represents half a day a week and over a 5 year period will mean that half a year of education has been missed.

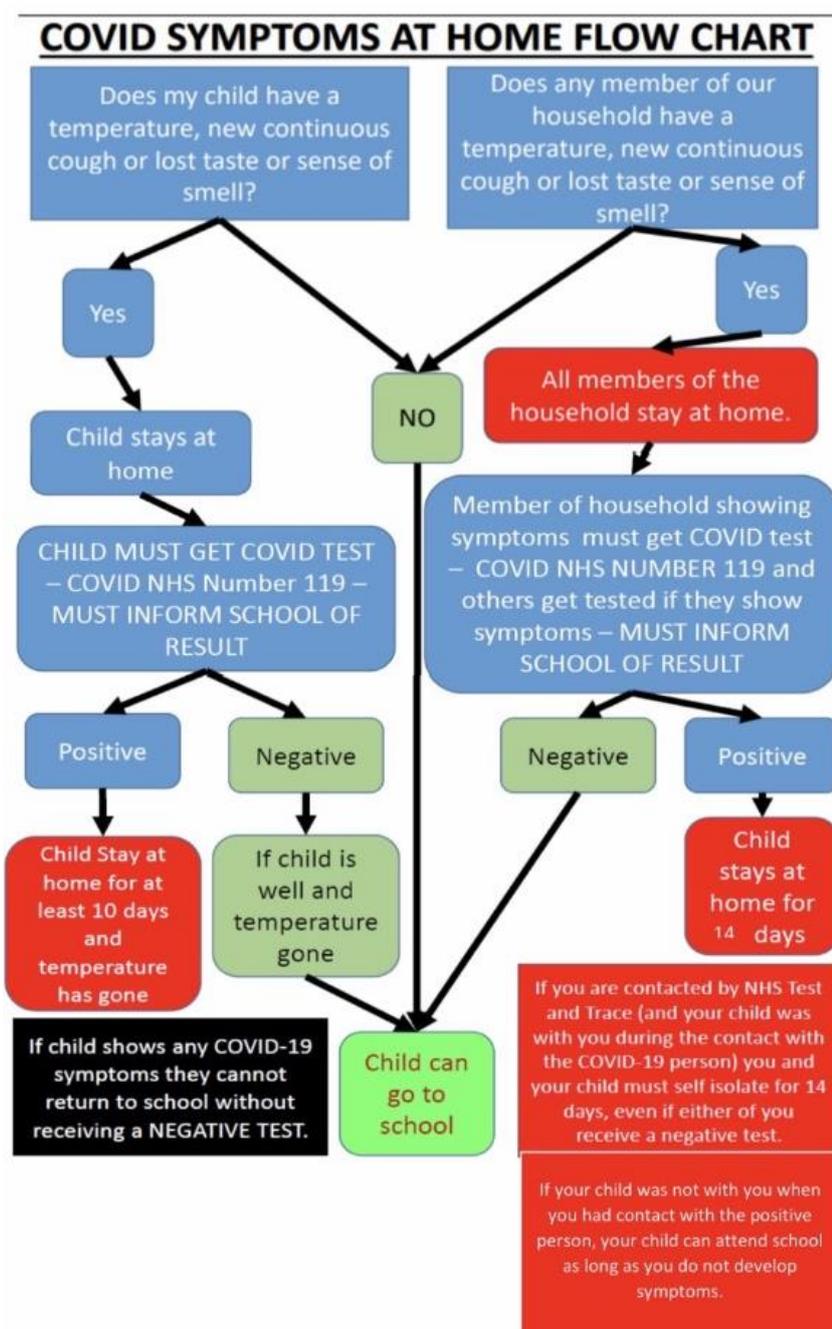
Research by the Department for Education shows that 73% of students who have over 95% attendance will achieve at least 5 GCSEs at Grade 5 or above, whereas for those with absence of more than 50%, only 3% achieved 5 good GCSE grades.

% Attendance	Days lost each week	Yearly loss of learning	Likely outcome
100% Attendance			
95% Attendance	1 day a month	Two weeks a year	73% are likely to achieve 5 good GCSEs
90% Attendance	Half a day a week	One month a year	About 50% will achieve 5 good GCSEs
80% Attendance	1 day a week	Half a term a year	Only 30% will achieve 5 good GCSEs
50% Attendance	2 and a half days a week	Six months a year	Only 3% will achieve 5 good GCSEs

Please see below for further details of the procedures that Prospect School adhere to with regard to attendance at the school and whenever your child is absent from school.

COVID-19

We recognise that this is very anxious time for many and sometimes the guidance might seem confusing. Please follow the attached flowchart if you are unsure:



For reasons relating to COVID, this will not be recorded as an absence as your child will be provided with work via MS Teams that can be completed remotely.

If your child is absent, you **MUST**:-

- Telephone the school, before 8am and advise us of your child's absence, if we are unable to talk to you personally, please leave a brief message informing us of your child's name, class, reason for absence and expected date of return.
- We may call you back during the day to discuss the reasons for your child's absence.

When your child returns to school after an absence, you **MUST**:-

- Email the attendance officer ([kturner@prospect.reading.sch.uk](mailto:kturner@prospect.reading.sch.uk)) with a written explanation for absence and medical evidence as required. This must be done for all absences even though you will have previously rung and spoken/left a message.
- Any absence that is not explained with a note will be classed as unauthorised. If there are more than 3 separate occasions of unauthorised absences you will be asked to attend an interview with the attendance officer to explain the reasons and medical evidence will be required for it to be authorised.
- If your child is still off after 3 consecutive days, a telephone call is required, giving us an update of your child's illness. If they are still off after 5 consecutive days we would expect them to have seen a doctor. For illnesses of this length we will ask to see medical evidence, either in the form of a certificate, dated/stamped appointment card or photocopy of the prescription.

Medical Appointments

If your child has a medical appointment of any kind (i.e. Dr's, dentist, hospital or opticians) please bring in either the appointment card or a letter to confirm this. For morning or afternoon appointments we expect the child to be in school for the other half of the day. If you need to take your child out of school to accompany you to an appointment, this will be an unauthorised absence.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE – LOSS OF LEARNING

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 states that Head teachers may not authorise any leave of absence (i.e. holiday taken in term time). They are only allowed to consider a leave of absence if the circumstances are classed as exceptional, i.e. compassionate grounds and permission has been requested to the Headteacher. **It is not the right of the parent to take children away during term time.**
- The Attendance Officer works with Head teacher in overseeing any such requests from parents. If the school does not agree to the request then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If the leave of absence involves any travel arrangements, these must not be booked until permission is granted by the Head teacher. The Exceptional Leave of Absence application form is available from the Attendance Officer who passes the request to the Headteacher along with the attendance certificate and any other relevant information.

A letter of approval (or a letter stating the request is not approved) will then be sent to the

parent/guardian clearly stipulating that approval is only given in these exceptional circumstances and that no further requests will be considered. Parents/Guardians are also informed that if any leave is taken beyond the dates agreed, a Penalty Notice\*\* could be issued to each parent and if applicable for each child.

- If your child is absent for more than 10 days beyond the agreed date of return, then the school may remove their name from the school roll, and you would have to reapply for a place through the local authority on your return.

*\*\* Penalty Notice is a fine imposed where a parent fails to ensure that their child is in education or has an unacceptable period of unauthorised absences. The Penalty Notice is £60 that must be paid within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.*

### Lateness

- All students need to be in school by 8.25am. In order to maintain our COVID-Secure bubbles, students who arrive late may not be admitted and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

### Penalty Notices

- Where a child's absence does cause concern, our Education Welfare Officer will become involved, and you could be issued with a Penalty Notice if your child has less than 92% unauthorised attendance, taken an unauthorised holiday or if your child is late (after the close of registers) more than 5 times. This is a fine of £60 (this Notice will apply to each child that you have at Prospect School, not £60 per family). You have 14 days to pay this, if it is not paid within the 28 days it rises to £120. You then have 14 more days to pay this and if no payment is received you can then be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance. This fine could be as high as £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

In order to support good attendance, we are working with WPA Education Services. This is an external company with whom we may share data relevant to your child's attendance.

We reward not just good individual and class attendance in school, but also much improved attendance from pupils. We know that we all need to work together on this matter to improve attendance and achievement of our children and I thank you in advance for your co-operation. If you would like clarification on any of the above please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Ms M Morris  
Deputy Headteacher