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NEWARK
ACADEMY

1st March 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

I hope this letter finds you well.

I would like the main focus of my letter this week to be on the importance of attendance and its impact on our children's education.

In January 2024, the Department for Education launched a national campaign to remind families of the importance of student attendance at school. The campaign responds to a worrying national increase in student absences. Although we are delighted that our school sits above national average for our overall school attendance, we have recently seen a small dip.

Research shows that lower attendance leads to lower attainment outcomes for students at Key Stage 4. This means a child with regular attendance makes significantly more progress academically than a child attending school less often. These children gain weaker exam results and, as result, have fewer options and opportunities available to them.

While the link between attendance and attainment is clear, **absence is not just about exam results**. It is about all the other important moments in school that help shape our young people:

- building positive relationships with friends
- taking part in extracurricular activities and trips
- developing important personal skills and finding a sense of belonging within the school community.
- develop work habits such as good punctuality which are essential to thrive in the world of employment.

Statistics show young people will only be able to realise their full potential, academically and personally, if they are in school and ready to learn at least 95% of the time. I must also stress that it is never too late to benefit from good attendance.

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons

I appreciate that there are times when absence is unavoidable and a student is too unwell to attend. Equally, for some families, the challenges around attendance are very real and there are significant barriers preventing children from coming into school. If you are struggling and need support, please contact your child's Head of Crew and we will work with you to put a plan in place.

Ultimately, as parents and teachers, we all want the best for our children. At Newark Academy, we will always strive to place them at the heart of everything we do. **A big thank you to the majority of parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.**

In other news, in assemblies this week we have been exploring diversity in literature: novels which have been censored or banned for their political opinions, including characters who are a minority race or sexuality, or books which have been removed from shelves simply in response to their covers with no exploration of the deep literary themes inside. We have considered examples of this censorship in some American states and also paused to learn of schools in England which have banned and censored books and authors. This has led to us thinking about reading as a human right in the run up to World Book Day on Thursday 7th March.

Have a restful weekend.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Inma Peña', written over a horizontal line.

Inma Peña
Headteacher