



8<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Dear Parent/Carer

At Newark Academy we are committed to ensuring that our students have every opportunity to develop character, achieve success and realise their full potential. In order for our students to secure achievement at Newark Academy, it is vital that they attend every day, work hard and are kind to one another. To ensure that all families are aware of our attendance and punctuality policy I wanted to highlight a number of key points which aim to provide you with important updates in preparation for September 2018.

### School Absence

Whilst we expect all children to attend every day it is inevitable that from time to time certain things will prevent this. If your child is unable to attend school for any reason it is vital that you let school know and the expectation is that this happens for each day of absence. As well as being a key piece of safeguarding practice it also ensures effective communication between home and school which is critical in supporting the return of children to school after absence.

Our academy has unashamedly high expectations across all areas of the Academy and any absence from school will be unauthorised unless the following are in place:

- Your child has attendance greater than 93% and a justified reason for absence has been provided for each day of absence
- Evidence has been provided which demonstrates that your child has been to see a doctor (where appropriate) or has a medical appointment

Communication regarding attendance is key to ensuring that you are kept aware of how your child's school attendance is progressing. We work on set trigger points when it comes to attendance communication which can be summarised as follows:

Attendance drops below 93% and includes periods of unauthorised absence – Attendance Awareness letter is sent.

Attendance does not improve within an agreed time period following the Attendance Awareness Letter – Attendance Panel Meeting letter is sent.

These letters can often alarm some parents due to the legal content that we make reference to. Whilst we don't wish to cause any alarm to our parents and families it is vitally important that you are fully aware of legislation relating to our attendance policy and we will always endeavour to support you and your child within this process; our intentions are only ever to improve children's success at school.

### **Holidays**

As an academy we do not authorise holidays during term time but have always avoided following the penalty notice route. We have found however that this slightly contradicts our view of the importance of attendance to school and whilst we do not follow penalty notice and legal proceedings for poor attendance we have not yet challenged the situations where families willingly remove children from school for holidays. We feel that this has sent a contradictory message which we are going to rectify. As of September 2018 all holidays taken during term time will be referred to the local authority for penalty notice. The only exception to this change are where a holiday has to be taken during term time due to significant work commitments, for example, service men/women who are not permitted to take leave during certain times of the year. The only other exception to this is for any holidays which have been booked prior to this letter being issued; evidence will be required in order to confirm this.

### **Punctuality**

If your child is late to school without a legitimate reason provided by the parent then a break time detention will be issued that same day. If a child is late three times within a week then a 1 hour after school detention will be issued for the day of the third late mark. For instances where poor punctuality is persistent then a panel meeting will be arranged for parents and the potential for penalty notice discussed.

To help you and your child understand the impact that poor attendance can have on the number of days missed across a school career I have attached a graphic which will be a good point of reference.

If you would like to discuss the content of this letter please feel free to call the academy to make an appointment where one of the attendance team will happily arrange to meet you.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Chris Fisher  
School Leader