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**CAISTER
ACADEMY**
*Creative
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Thursday 12 January 2023

Dear Parent

We hope you and your children have enjoyed a pleasant Christmas break and that your sons/daughters are prepared to step back into the routine of this school term. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your hard work and commitment in ensuring that our young people attend school daily and arrive on time and are ready to learn. Particularly, for those students whose attendance sits above 96% as this is an impressive achievement.

Last half term we enjoyed a successful Christmas rewards event for our 100% attenders where we raffled off family Amazon vouchers within each year group, and one extremely lucky winner of a brand new i-Pad.

At the start of this new term, I would like to reiterate the expectations of our attendance policy and remind you of the importance of good attendance moving forward.

Our Attendance Policy

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly.

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. Our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

To enable us to keep your children safe, we need to know where they are during term time. If your child can not attend school, please take the following steps:

1. Contact us on 01493 720542 ext. 201 as soon as possible on the first day of absence.
2. Contact the school on each subsequent day that the pupil is absent from school and inform the school of the expected return date.
3. Send a note on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – parents should do this in addition to telephoning us.

If your child does not attend school, we will:

1. Contact you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
2. Expect your child to catch up missed work and homework on their return.

Our pastoral team may visit your home address should we receive no reason for absence to either alert you to the absence and to collect the reason for absence. It is vitally important that you inform us if you change your phone number for any reason.

If your child's attendance is broken by regular absence due to minor illnesses (broken weeks) we will write to you to advise you that any further absences will not be authorised without medical evidence. In these circumstances reporting your child ill will no longer be sufficient to authorise the absence.

We understand that occasionally absences can't be helped but do ask that you work collaboratively with the academy on any occasion that your child is not present.

We are expected to take steps to rectify any attendance concern which falls below the government's guideline percentage. For example, if your child's attendance is between 90-95%, this will be monitored weekly as 'a concern' and you may be contacted by us. Should your child's attendance fall below 90% they will meet the government's threshold of being identified as a 'persistent absentee' (PA pupil). At this point the academy is required to work with you to put in place some intervention strategies to improve attendance.

Should your child's attendance fall further to below 85% and cause serious concern, the academy uses the Fast-Track Process. This is a time limited intervention (up to 12 weeks) whereby you and the academy are expected to work together to promote a significant improvement in attendance. If your child's attendance does not significantly improve in this time the Local Authority may choose to take formal legal action against you as opposed to issuing a fixed penalty notice – you should also be aware that if convicted of an offence of failing to ensure regular attendance of your child at school under Section 444, 1 / 1A Education Act 1996, you could be fined up to £1,000 / £2,500 and/or receive a term of imprisonment not exceeding 3 months.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

- 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence where some or all the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time: or
- 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday. Any pupil at Caister Academy who meets either of the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a Fixed Penalty Notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

In a government published document focused on improving school attendance it is noted that '*at KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall attendance rate of 91.2%, compared to 94.8% among those achieving grade 4. The overall attendance rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was significantly lower than those achieving grade 9 to 5 (91.2% compared to 96.3%).*' Therefore, we are very keen to encourage good attendance at school as we know that being in school makes a huge difference to young people's academic progress and social development.

Finally, as mentioned, we have a new rewards scheme for this academic year to continually celebrate our young people with brilliant attendance. Please continue to keep an eye on our website and social media for the latest events and prizes to celebrate these successes.

I look forward to another successful term working with you to ensure the very best outcomes for your child.

Yours faithfully



Rachel Ford
Assistant Principal for Attendance & Interventions