



6 October 2024

Dear Parent / Carer

Urgent Appeal for Year 11 Attendance

As Year 11 is now fully underway, we are writing to highlight a crucial issue, that of Year 11 attendance. Last Friday, 19% (28 students) of our Year 11 students were absent. This is concerning, especially as we enter the most important phase of your child's secondary education. In just 4 school weeks, on 11 November, Year 11 will begin their first round of Year 11 PPEs or 'mock' exams.

Missing two weeks for a family holiday taken in term time will mean that your child has missed 50 hours of learning new things - these topics will never be taught again but will be included in their exams in the very near future. Broken attendance (a day off every week or fortnight, on random days) means that students will not only miss 5 hours of new learning on each occasion but will struggle to understand the work they need to do in following lessons as lessons are taught in sequences that rely on prior knowledge.

In assemblies, we have spoken to students about the significant correlation between absence and exam results. Put simply, those who attend school regularly over 95% of the time perform over 1.5 grades higher than those who do not. We encourage students to reflect on the workplace, where high levels of absence and poor punctuality can result in dismissal. This is an important reminder of why developing a positive attitude to attendance habits is key.

Our experience tells us that attendance is a serious concern. Every year we watch students open their exam results in the summer, when many students are ecstatic with their results and get the option to study any course they want to at their chosen sixth form provider as they have met or exceeded the entry criteria. Sadly, we also see the opposite. Year 11 students only have around 125 school days left until their formal exams start in May 2025 so every day really does matter.

Please note too that there have been changes to how schools record attendance, following the publication of a Department for Education document this summer. One of the key implications of this is the way in which schools manage and record holidays taken during term time. Previously, parents have informed the school of intended holidays and asked for permission for the holiday to be approved by the school. Under the new guidance this is not possible as schools are no longer able to use an approved code enabling this. All holidays taken during term time are therefore recorded as unauthorised. We strongly encourage parents to ensure that students do

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not take holidays during term time but should this be the case, we would still ask that you inform us of your intention to take your child on holiday during term time to aid with our safeguarding responsibilities within school.

Thank you to all of the families who are already prioritising attendance; your commitment is making a huge difference and it is appreciated. Every student who achieves 100% attendance every week receives a ticket for the 100 Club draw - a chance to win one of 3 £100 prizes at the end of this half term. We look forward to seeing your child at school on Monday.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Team
George Pindar School