

29 September 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to make you aware of the Academy's Attendance Policy and expectations for 2017-2018.

The Department of Education issues advice and statistics which prove a strong link between attendance and achievement. As is known, poor attendance will lead to underachievement and insufficient progress therefore it is vital that your child achieves their full potential at St Mark's Academy by ensuring they are in attendance every day and on time.

### **Attendance**

**A minimum attendance of 96% is expected of all students at the Academy.**

In order for us to support the attainment and progress of your child, they must attend on time every day.

**If your child's attendance falls below 96%, we will begin to monitor their attendance.**

Our communication and monitoring will consist of:

- Phone calls home from the Academy Attendance Officer, Coach and Progress Leader.
- Letters informing you of our concern regarding your child's poor attendance.
- Meetings with parents/carers to discuss our attendance concerns and work together to improve attendance.
- A home visit if persistent absence is below 90%, without a valid reason.

Please be aware that it is our aim to support you and ensure that your child attends school so that they can thrive. As such we may collect your child by mini bus and bring them to school so that they engage with learning. Please understand that these measures are in place to ensure your child's academic success. We will continue this action until such time as they have improved their attendance to above 96% and got back on track with their learning.

**Please be aware that if a child's attendance fails to improve, they are identified as a persistent absentee which leads to a referral being made to the London Borough of Merton Education Welfare Service who will initiate the issuing of a Penalty Notice, where a fine of up to £120 can be enforced.**

### **Medical & Dental Appointments**

Appointments must be made outside the Academy day where possible, as we cannot authorise these. Suitable medical evidence must be provided on your child's return to school if an appointment cannot be made outside Academy hours. If you are unable to make an appointment outside of the Academy day, please ensure the absence is limited to the duration of the appointment, and reasonable travel time.

For sickness, evidence can be in the form of a doctor's certificate; a copy of a prescription or prescribed medication with the child's name and date on the bottle or packet. In the case of a medical appointment, kindly provide the appointment card or letter.

Lack of such evidence will result in your child's absence being recorded as unauthorised and this in turn may lead to a **fine of £120 in the first instance**. Your child may also be added to the absence list and a member of Academy staff may visit your home if we have not been provided with a valid reason for any absence by 8.30am.

#### **Holidays, visits abroad for family weddings/memorial services**

Please ensure visits abroad for family services, holidays etc. are not booked within term time as we cannot authorise these absences. Holidays and visits in term time will affect your child's attendance figures and will be recorded as unauthorised absence; this in turn may lead to a **fine of £120 in the first instance**.

#### **Arriving late to the Academy**

All students are expected to arrive at the Academy no later than 8.30am. Failure to arrive by 8.30am will result in a 15 minute lunchtime/after school detention. If a student's arrives later than 8.40am, a longer detention will be set for the Friday afternoon of the following week.

Students whose punctuality falls below 96% will be placed on punctuality report to their Coach.

**If your child is late on 10 occasions, you will be invited to a meeting to discuss our increasing concerns and set punctuality targets with their Coach. If your child reaches 15 incidents of lateness, they will be sanctioned with a day in the Internal Exclusion Centre.**

If your child is feeling ill/sick in the morning please try to send them to the Academy. If your child continues to feel poorly during the day, we will assess the situation and contact you if we do not think they are fit for school and send them home if required. Please note a student who arrives to the Academy after 9.30 am receives an absence mark for their AM session.

**If your child is not attending school, it is essential that a parent or carer calls each morning on the day of absence before 8.30am, to do this, please call 020 8648 6627 and select option 1 to go to the attendance office. If the line is busy, please leave a clear message with your child's full name and reason for absence.**

We look forward to working with you in partnership to ensure good attendance and therefore outstanding achievement is our collective responsibility and priority. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything else you would like to discuss.

Yours faithfully



Mr A Sheppard  
**Senior Vice Principal**