



1st September 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to a new academic year! I hope you and your families have enjoyed a restful and restorative summer break. As Headteacher, I am looking forward to greeting both familiar faces and new members of our school community, and beginning this year together with renewed energy and shared purpose.

Start of term reminders - 25/26 Academic Year

Monday 1st September	Tuesday 2nd September	Wednesday 3rd September	Thursday 4th September	Friday 5th September
Staff Training Day <i>Students not in school</i>	Staff Training Day <i>Students not in school</i>	Year 7 ONLY <i>Y9/10 New Starter Lunch 1pm; Y12/13 Induction 9.30am - 10.30am</i>	Year 7, 11 & Sixth Form ONLY	Y8, 9 and 10 start

National Context on Attendance and Behaviour and the link between Attendance and Outcomes

You may have seen in the [news](#) yesterday Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson talking about the urgent need for parents, schools, and families to unite in tackling poor attendance and disruptive behaviour in schools across England. She emphasised there is still a worrying rise in severely absent pupils—those missing more than 50% of school time. Bridget Phillipson also highlighted the importance of attendance in the first week back; over half of those who missed time in the first week back became persistent absentees last academic year.

GCSE exam results reveal a concerning pattern: *unauthorised absence is a key driver of the widening attainment gap between disadvantaged students and their peers*. Students severely absent are less likely to achieve qualifying GCSE grades and more likely to face long-term economic disadvantage. This demonstrates that consistent attendance is far more than just being present—it's foundational to educational success and future life chances. **We have seen this starkly at our school this summer - only 8% of students with below 90% attendance achieved a 5+ strong pass in both English and Maths.**

At LHS, we're deeply committed to ensuring every child thrives. But progress requires a strong partnership between school and home. Here's how you can support your child from day 1 this term:



- **Prioritise regular attendance:** Every lesson counts. Frequent absences—even if authorised—can set learning gaps that are difficult to close. A pupil with 90% attendance will miss 20 days of school meaning 100 hours of lost learning.
- **Communicate promptly** if your child is unwell or facing difficulties—they're much more likely to bounce back when we intervene early and supportively.
- **Reinforce expectations around behaviour**, especially regarding punctuality, respect, and focus in the classroom.
- **Engage with support opportunities**—this can make a real difference.

Introducing Our New Parent Guide

To assist you in this partnership, we are pleased to launch our new **A-Z Parent Guide**, available now on our website here: <https://longbenton.org.uk/parents/parent-hand-book>. This guide includes:

- Clear attendance expectations and support procedures
- A-Z details for all aspects of school life (eg. uniform)
- School term dates, key contacts, and how to reach staff

Please take time to review it—it's designed to equip you with the information and confidence to support your child effectively. We are happy to take feedback about anything you think is missing and will add to this guide as the year progresses.

In Summary

- **Support attendance from Day 1 to build good habits for this academic year.** This summer we saw a gap of 39% achieving a 5+ in both English and Maths between those with 98%+ attendance and those with below 90% attendance. Make sure your child is in the right group. You can find out attendance policy here: <https://longbenton.org.uk/parents/policies>
- **Your positive engagement is central**—consistent attendance and positive behaviours drive success for your children.
- Our **Parent Guide** is your go-to resource this year
<https://longbenton.org.uk/parents/parent-hand-book>

Let's make 2025–26 a year of strong attendance, engagement and progress. We are looking forward to working with you every step of the way.

With best wishes for a wonderful term ahead.



Longbenton
HIGH SCHOOL

Kelly Holbrook

Kelly Holbrook
Headteacher
Longbenton High School