



28th March 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

Importance of Regular School Attendance for GCSE Success

As we approach a crucial period in your child's academic journey, we would like to emphasise the significant impact that regular school attendance has on GCSE outcomes. **Currently your child's attendance is below 90% and puts them into the category of Persistent Absenteeism.** Those with poor attendance tend to achieve less and that was certainly the case at GCSE level here last summer: **those with 98% attendance did over twice as well on average as those with attendance below 90%.** We have a duty of care to ensure high rates of attendance to school, whilst also robustly challenging poor attendance.

We understand that life can present various challenges and unforeseen circumstances that may occasionally hinder your child's attendance. However, it is crucial to recognize the direct correlation between consistent school attendance and academic success, particularly in the context of GCSE examinations. **Year 11 have another mock exam window starting next week, week beginning 18th March; this is their last opportunity for a full practice run before the final exams start in May.**

The correlation to poor attendance and students failing to attend their GCSE exams without valid reasons is high. In light of this, we must inform you of the consequences of such actions. **Any student who fails to attend a scheduled GCSE examination without a legitimate and documented reason will be subject to a fine of £60 for each individual missed exam.** This policy is in place to emphasise the importance of punctuality, responsibility, and commitment to students academic obligations. It costs us tens of thousands of pounds each year to administer exams both in exam board fees and invigilator costs. We cannot simply absorb costs for students not attending exams or students who have no intention of completing any exams.

We understand that unforeseen circumstances may arise, and we remain committed to considering valid reasons for non-attendance. If you anticipate any challenges that may hinder your child's ability to attend an exam, it is crucial to communicate with us as soon as possible, providing appropriate documentation (eg GP letter) to support your case.

To optimise your child's chances of success in their upcoming GCSEs, we encourage you to prioritise regular attendance and communicate any challenges or concerns promptly. Our school community is here to provide assistance and work collaboratively with you to overcome any obstacles that may arise.

Please contact year11@longbenton.org.uk with any concerns or queries you may have.

Your sincerely,

Sarah Willis
Deputy Headteacher - Quality of Education