



September 2019

Dorchester Area Schools Partnership
c/o The Thomas Hardy School
Queens Avenue
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 2ET

Dear Parent/Guardian

Information for all parents and carers on the importance of attendance and the Attendance Process

The Thomas Hardy School is committed to ensuring the best for all our learners and are working together with parents and carers to support children and families. All schools are working hard to promote good attendance and have common systems in place to work with families when attendance drops below an acceptable level.

You will be aware of the importance of good school attendance in improving a young person's chance of success in life and in establishing positive attitudes to lifelong learning. There is clear evidence of the link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. Statistically it has been proven that only 35% of pupils with an attendance of less than 90% achieve five or more GCSE's with the grades of 9-4 including English and Maths.

If a child has an attendance level of below 90% this means they will have missed an average of one day a fortnight in school. Over a school year this will represent four weeks of absence. If this level of absence were maintained for a five year period it would mean half a school year would have been missed.

Here at The Thomas Hardy School we are determined to ensure that all our students have the opportunity to achieve success and have an excellent record of attendance. Where there is cause for concern you will be contacted and attendance closely monitored. If attendance does not improve sufficiently, you will be invited to an attendance meeting in school. This meeting is an opportunity for the school, family and a representative from Dorset County Council's School Attendance Service to meet together to discuss why your child has such a high absence rate and seek solutions to any problems. If there is still no improvement following this meeting you will be invited to the DASP Attendance Panel meeting.

The meeting can recommend several outcomes, which can include a further period of close monitoring with specified targets for attendance, issuing a £60 penalty notice, a parenting order, or seeking prosecution which could result in a fine of up to £1,000.

The attendance process is designed to identify poor attendees quickly and address the issues that are affecting their attendance. When attendance improves, monitoring will continue and, if it falls the attendance process will be resumed. All schools hope that the attendance meeting will not be needed and that all students maintain a good record of attendance for the benefit of their happiness and success in school.

Yours sincerely

M T Foley
Thomas Hardy School
Chair Dorchester Area Schools Partnership

