



# NEWSTEAD WOOD SCHOOL

*"creating opportunities for success"*



23 January 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

## Newstead Moments Matter

I am writing to you about school absence and the national (and local) crisis schools have faced since the pandemic. Studies show that January is a vital month in regards to attendance, and patterns in January often reflect the rest of the year.

This is one of the reasons the government have asked all schools to make attendance a priority. At Newstead Wood School, amazing things happen every day. That is why, in line with the DfE, we are launching our attendance drive of "Newstead Moments Matter: Attendance Counts".

[This NHS guidance](#) is the first place to check when deciding whether your child is too ill for school. In addition to respiratory illnesses, we are aware that more children may be absent from school due to symptoms of anxiety than before the pandemic. Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it. You can find resources about anxiety and mental health on the Let's All Talk Mental Health resource provided by the school which you can access by registering [here](#).

## The link between attendance and attainment is clear

- In 2018/19, just 40% of persistently absent (PA) children in KS2 achieved expected KS2 standards, compared with 84% of pupils who were regular attenders.
- And 36% of persistently absent children in KS4 got 9 to 4 in their English and maths GCSEs compared with 84% of regular attenders.

This is why we have such a high focus on attendance at Newstead Wood School. Students who regularly attend get access to expert teaching, fantastic lessons and Newstead Moments and have a higher chance of accessing the highest grades.

## It is never too late to benefit from good attendance

- More than half (54%) of pupils who were persistently absent in Year 10 and then rarely absent in Year 11 passed at least 5 GCSEs, compared to 36% of pupils who were persistently absent in both years.

We will continue with our fortnightly pastoral reports but the attendance percentage will reset so you will receive your child's percentage for the current term.

**Headteacher:** Mr Alan Blount, MA, BSc, QTS

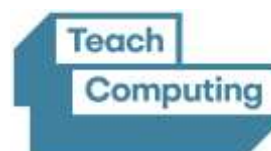
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**Attendance is important for more than just attainment;** regular school attendance can facilitate positive peer relationships, which is a protective factor for mental health and wellbeing.

We do have a small number of students whose attendance is below our target of 97%. We understand that totals and averages mean little other than illustrating the concerns each school faces as well as the national figure. What matters most is your own child's attendance to school.

Missing two weeks for a family holiday taken in term time would mean that your child has missed 50 hours of learning new things which they may never be taught again but will face questions on in an exam in the future. Having broken attendance (a day off every week or fortnight on random days) means students will miss 5 hours of new learning each time and may struggle to understand the work they do the following week because lessons are taught in sequences which rely on prior knowledge; this is particularly vital in Year 11 and 13.

I know how much you as parents value education and the experiences students receive at school, especially at Newstead. I would like to leave you with the quote the Government has asked me to share:

***"From the first day of term to the last, the small moments in a school day make a real difference to your child. #AttendanceCounts"***

Yours sincerely,



**Mr B Williams**  
**Assistant Headteacher**

