



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



Manor Park CE First School
Mellstock Avenue
Dorchester
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20th October 2015

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

Dear Parent / Carer

The schools within the Dorchester area regularly work together through the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership (DASP). Members of the partnership are committed to ensuring the best for all our learners and work together to support children and families. All schools are working very hard to promote good attendance and have common systems in place to work with families when attendance drops below an acceptable level. The Dorchester Area Schools Partnership support schools to deal with situations when a child's attendance fails to improve and continues to be below acceptable levels.

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. Of pupils who miss between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of school, only 35 per cent achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and Maths, but 73 per cent of pupils who attend 95 per cent of school will achieve this. *(DfE June 2012)*

If a child has an attendance level of below 95 % 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. Across DASP, if a school is concerned about a child's attendance they will talk to the parents and write to them to explain why. They will then monitor attendance expecting to see an improvement. If no improvement is made, the family will be invited to attend an Attendance Panel.

Here at Manor Park CE First School we are determined to ensure that all our students have the opportunity to achieve success and have an excellent attendance record. All students' attendance is monitored. Where there is cause for concern you will be contacted and attendance closely monitored for the next six weeks. If attendance has not improved sufficiently - usually at least 95% you will be invited to an attendance panel. The panel is an opportunity for the school, family, other agencies and a solicitor from Dorset County Council Legal and Democratic Services Department to meet together to discuss why a child has such high absence rates and to hopefully come up with solutions to any problems. The panel can recommend several outcomes including a further six week 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 £2,500 and/or custody.

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 Panel will not be needed and that all pupils will have a good record of attendance. Manor Park CE First School and the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership's aim is to work together to give your child the opportunity to benefit from their time at school and for them to be happy and successful.

Yours sincerely

Melanie Pallister
Chair, Dorchester Area Schools Partnership