

Wednesday 24th January 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to you about the school absence and the national (and local) crisis schools have faced since the pandemic.

Today, an unremarkable Wednesday in the third week back, 10% of our students are absent from school.

We've become used to these statistics and sadly, these patterns of absence are now considered normal in school. Indeed, our attendance is higher than national and local averages.

Totals and averages mean little other than to illustrate the problem we face in school. What matters most is your own child's attendance.

Missing two weeks for a family holiday taken in term time will mean that your child has missed 50 hours of learning new things which will 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 that students will miss 5 hours of new learning each time but will struggle to understand the work they do the following week because lessons are taught in sequences which rely on prior knowledge.

I have spoken before about the significant correlation between absence and exam results. Put simply, students who miss school regularly, reduce their lifetime earning potential because they achieve worse exam results than their peers. They develop poor habits to take into the workplace; where high levels of absence, poor punctuality or an indifferent attitude to responsibility can result in dismissal. Prior attendance is also asked for by future education providers such as colleges and universities.

You may think I am over-dramatizing, but my experience tells me that this is a real concern and the Government agrees because they have highlighted the issue in recent weeks. Please can I ask that if your child is absent from school regularly (students should have full attendance most weeks) you seek to address this and ask us for support if you are struggling with your child.

Yours faithfully



Mrs C Bonner

Senior Deputy Headteacher

www.cleevepark-tkat.org

Cleeve Park School, Bexley Lane
Sidcup, Kent
DA14 4JN

Tel: 020 8302 6418
Fax: 020 8308 1571
Email: enquiries@cleevepark-tkat.org

Headteacher: Mrs Alex O'Donnell
Company Registration Number: 7348231

