

Dear Parent/Carer,

## Welcome to our first Attendance Update: Secondary Edition

The aim of this letter is to promote improved attendance for the students in our schools and to raise awareness of the importance of good school attendance. Each term we will be focusing on a topic related to attendance, this term it is assessing whether your child is too unwell to attend school. We will also keep you informed of attendance related projects and work in our schools.

The newsletter will be issued termly to all parents/ carers, we hope you find this helpful and informative.

***“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”- Nelson Mandela.***

### Congratulations

We would like to thank and congratulate the many parents and carers who make sure that their children get the most out of their education by attending every day and arriving on time!

Our schools monitor students with attendance of 95% or under (equivalent to 10 missed school days over an academic year). 73% of students who have attendance over 95% or over achieve 5 or more GCSE's at grades A\*-C, so it's vital that children are in school to learn. In addition to individual attendance targets, each of our schools has an overall attendance target, there is still a way to go in many of our schools to hit our targets so we need your help.

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they're unwell. At the end of this newsletter we have some useful tips on how to assess whether your child is too unwell to be in school, please have a read and ensure that your child is in school whenever they are

well enough to be. If your child becomes unwell at school the school will send your child home. If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school each morning. Let them know that they won't be in and give them the reason.

There are two registration sessions in a school day so if you can, send them in later in the day if your child appears to improve- **every session counts!**

### Inter-Schools Attendance Competition

A huge well done to The Ridgeway School who has won TWHF trophies for 'Best Overall' and 'Most Improved' Attendance in the Secondary Schools category for terms 1-4. The Ridgeway School's passion for supporting students to be in school each day and make the most of their education is an inspiration. Well done to staff teams, parents/ carers and students for making this happen. Which of our other secondary schools will challenge for the title next term, come on Devizes, John Madejski Academy and Gloucester Academy! As parents/carers, please have a think about what can you do to help.

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## Is my child 'too ill' for school?

There are clear [government guidelines](#) for schools that say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't.

The below guidance taken from the NHS website and includes information on common childhood illnesses where school is missed when it needn't be. It is vital to follow this, as school will unauthorise your child's absence if they feel they are well enough to be in school (this could lead to consequences for parents/ carers, which we would like to avoid!):

### Coughs and colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor [cough](#) or [cold](#). But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

### Sore throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a [sore throat](#). But if they also have a fever, they should stay at home until it goes away.

### Menstrual Cramps

School should not be missed due to 'the time of the month'. It's important for your child to have pads or tampons with them at all times and ensure that they are comfortable making regular trips to the bathroom. Consider a suitable 'hiding place' for products, whether it be a spare 'pencil case' or a side pocket of their bag as some children can feel nervous about sanitary products being discovered. It's also a good idea to have a spare pair of underwear for in case of emergency. Consider whether medication is needed if nausea and pain is recurring and talk to school about whether this can be stored for use at school, or whether your child will need to take this before school. Most of our secondary schools will have emergency products available should a child not have access to them. Please make your child aware that teachers and staff at school will be more than prepared to help with this problem.

### Conjunctivitis

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have [conjunctivitis](#).

Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

### Head lice and nits

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You should treat your child and send them into school.

**Thank you** for your support in helping to raise attendance, if you need support or advice relating to your child's attendance, please contact your child's school.

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