6th April 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

Key stage 4 is a challenging but exciting time for students and in the run up to the Easter break I would like to remind parents and students on the use of mobile phones. A small minority of students have been using their mobile phones in lessons, which ultimately means they are not fully engaged in the lesson or the work. Texting other students in lessons is not acceptable and mobile phones are only to be used at breaks and during lunch. If a student is caught on their mobile phone, the phone will be confiscated for the rest of the day and can be collected by your child following their afterschool detention at 16.30. It is also important that parents resist the need to text their child during the lesson time as this increases the distraction. If you need to get hold of your child urgently, please contact reception and a message will be delivered to your son/daughter. In addition, there have been a few incidences of students taking photos of other students and staff without consent and posting on social media. This will not be tolerated and students caught doing this will be banned from having a mobile phone in school. These students will be required to hand in their mobile phone upon entry to school at 8.40.

Regular attendance at school is vital to help children achieve and get the best possible start in life. All children aged between 5 and 16 are required by law to receive an education, and it is the duty of parents and carers to ensure that they are supported to do so. Having a good education is an important factor in opening up more opportunities in adult life. A child who is absent on average, one day of school per week will miss an equivalent of two years of their school life. 90% of young people with absence rates below 85% fail to achieve five or more good grades of GCSE and around one third achieve no GCSEs at all. Poor examination results limit young people’s options and poor attendance not only contributes to poorer examination performance, but also suggests to colleges and employers that these students are unreliable.

Logically, if students are not in school, they are not learning and thus allowing their potential grades to suffer. What might seem insignificant as they lounge on the sofa on a day off school is that if they are not genuinely ill they should be in school and working their hardest towards achieving their best, no matter what year group they are in. The process of education is life long and we build on what we already know and therefore, if they skip school they are damaging their future. Each year there are 190 school days which leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping, birthday treats and non-urgent medical and dental appointments. Therefore the school is very unlikely to authorise absence for these reasons.

Attendance over one school year

If your son or daughter has:-

98% attendance = less than 4 days absent from school

95% attendance = less than 10 days absent from school

90% attendance = less than 4 weeks absent from school

85% attendance = 5 ½ weeks absent from school

80% attendance = 7 ½ weeks absent from school

Why is Punctuality Important?

Being on time:

• gets your day off to a good start and puts you in a positive frame of mind, so that you can make the most of your learning opportunities.

• sets positive patterns for the future. You can't expect to keep a job if you're always coming in late;

• leads to a good attendance record and means you don’t miss any morning notices;

• leads to better achievement because you attend the WHOLE of all of your classes;

• leads to understanding that school is important and education is valuable;

• helps you develop a sense of responsibility for yourself and towards others and is a sign of good character;

• is respectful to your teacher and to your classmates and builds good habits for later in life when your employer pays you to be on time;

• is very important indeed. Research shows that attendance and punctuality are the single most important factors in school

Finally, please can you continue to support the school by discussing with your child the importance of respect and how to talk to adults and their peers. Having ‘banter’ with another student at their emotional expense is classed as bullying. Bullying is when someone intimidates or causes harm to another person on purpose. Stephenson Studio School does not tolerate bullying.

I believe that it is through partnership between home and school that students will thrive and achieve their potential. If you have a concern about your son/daughter’s progress please contact his/her form tutor in the first instance.

Yours faithfully

Mrs King

Deputy Headteacher