

October 2019

Dear Parents/Carers

Attendance Update

Denton Community College has a student attendance target of 96%. If this is achieved this academic year, our school attendance will be better than the national average.

We are very fortunate that the vast majority of our students are well motivated, conscientious and keen to do well at school. Some of our students have poor attendance and punctuality and we are required to address this and ensure the attendance of these young people improves.

Good attendance leads to better outcomes for our students. Good attendance also leads to students feeling more involved, supported and fully invested in the ethos and culture of our school.

National data shows that students with good attendance (95% or above) achieve or exceed their target grades at GCSE. Two thirds of all students with attendance below 90% struggle to achieve their target grades. Every day really does count. Further facts:

- 95% attendance = 9 days of school missed
- 90% attendance = half a day of school missed every week since the start of the year. 1 whole year at 90% attendance = nearly 5 weeks of education missed (19 days)
- 85% attendance = nearly 6 weeks of education missed (28 days)
- DfE research shows that for every 17 days of school missed each year = a full GCSE grade is dropped (34 days = 2 grades dropped and so on)
- Lateness and poor punctuality also has a catastrophic impact. For example, 5 minutes late each day for the full year = more than 3 days of learning missed a year.

This pattern of lateness/ poor punctuality repeated over the course of the young person's school career across all key stages = more than a month lost due to being late by 5 minutes. Students later than 5 minutes or who regularly miss the start of lessons are reducing their chances of exam success even more.

Lateness

It is every parent/carer's responsibility to ensure their children arrive at school on time. The school day starts at 8.40am each day. A student should be in school at that time and not just arriving. Lateness can disrupt the learning of others and can result in a student feeling greater stress and achieving poorer outcomes.

Lateness is a form of absence.

All forms of absence impact negatively on learning and achievement for students. Please make sure your child arrives at school on time.

Minutes late per day	Days missed
5 Minutes	3.4 school days a year
10 Minutes	6.9 school days a year
15 Minutes	10.3 school days a year
20 Minutes	13.8 school days a year
30 Minutes	20.7 school days a year

Starting this week, late students will be required to enter school via a new student entrance by the Year 11 Homebase at the front of school. A member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Attendance Officer will be there to meet these students as they arrive.

Legal Penalties

We are required to follow statutory guidelines relating to attendance. Letters are sent home regularly to update parents/carers. These letters use Local Authority templates that schools in Tameside are required to use. They can seem very formal and contain legal references.

We are required to inform all parents/carers of the legislation relating to school attendance. The following text will be quoted on every attendance letter.

Please read the legal statement below carefully as it outlines the law concerning Penalty Notices and prosecutions from 1st September 2013. It is important to note that **both parents/carers will be issued with a Penalty Notice if their child is taken out of college without our consent. Please also note that this statement is included for INFORMATION ONLY. We are required to include this information on all letters relating to attendance. Including this statement does not mean that legal action will be taken, but that it is an option if unauthorised absence becomes a problem.**

If your child has been absent due to proven illness - please do not be alarmed by the contents of this letter. We are still required by law to inform you of the number of absences that your child has had. The following statement does not apply to you.

Penalty Notices for Non- College Attendance

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers designated LA Officers, Head Teachers (and Deputy and Assistant Head teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This means that when a student has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in any half term/term (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if the child persistently arrives late for college after the close of registration, their parent/s or carer/s may receive a Penalty Notice fine of £60, which must be paid within 21 days. If payment is made after 21 days but within 28 days, the penalty is increased to £120. Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in consideration of prosecution under the provisions of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Prosecution for Non-College Attendance

Failure to ensure the regular college attendance and good punctuality of your child may result in Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council taking legal action against you in the Magistrates Court. If your child fails to attend regularly and punctually we may refer you, with evidence, for consideration in relation to prosecuting you for an offence under the Education Act 1996.

Conviction of an offence under section 444(1) may result in a fine of £1000. Under section 444 (1A) convictions may result in a fine of £2500 or a prison sentence.

Please also be aware that we do not approve holiday absence at any time.

Parents/carers must ring/text into school on every day of absence, not just on the first day. If this does not happen, we are legally required to mark the additional days of absence as unauthorised. Obviously, where the absence is known about in advance and is supported by a hospital or doctor's letter, this is not necessary. The school's dedicated attendance phone number is 0161 337 3838.

Please do not hesitate to contact me (k.kilbane@dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk) or the school's Attendance Officer Mrs. Manuell (s.manuell@dentoncommunitycollege.org.uk) if you have any concerns or questions. Thank you for your on-going support.

Yours sincerely

Miss K Kilbane
(Assistant Headteacher)