



26th February 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

I am writing to you to express my **serious concern** regarding the overall attendance at Montem Academy this academic year. Whilst we appreciate and thank the many of our parents who ensure that their child attends school regularly and who refrain from removing their child during term time for extended leave, there has been an increase in the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school and from parents requesting extended leave **just before or just after a school holiday**. It is concerning that after making a strong start and introducing a number of initiatives to celebrate good attendance, a number of pupils continue to have poor attendance. This in turn has caused the overall attendance at Montem Academy to be considered an area of improvement.

Attending school is essential for students to make good progress, to achieve their academic potential and consequently have better chances in life. Every pupil at Montem Academy, in line with government expectations, is expected to maintain an attendance of at least 95%. Below are examples of how attendance is impacted upon by school absence.

Student attendance over one school year

- 98% attendance = approximately **4 days absent from school**
- 95% attendance = approximately **10 days absent from school**
- 90% attendance = approximately **4 weeks absent from school**
- 85% attendance = approximately **5 ½ weeks absent from school**
- 80% attendance = approximately **7 ½ weeks absent from school**

Missing time from school is detrimental to a child's education. If a child is regularly absent from school it can:

- lead to the child falling behind in work and performing less well in tests
- affect the child's motivation
- affect the child's enjoyment of learning
- lead to poor behaviour
- affect the child's desire to attend school regularly
- affect their confidence in school
- lead to them missing out on the social life of school and extra-curricular opportunities and experiences

Being absent from school or taking extended leave does not only impact on the child who has been absent. It also impacts on the support Montem Academy provides all other pupils. Additional adults employed to help and support pupils achieve more and to succeed are having to support those who have been absent to catch up.

Montem Academy will be taking additional action to ensure that attendance is improved. These will include:

- Senior Leaders will be carrying out home visit for pupils who are absent and have an overall attendance below 95%.
- Senior Leaders will invite parents into school to discuss concerns over attendance.
- Montem Academy will only authorise extended leave when there is strong evidence of exceptional circumstance.

P.T.O

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- Exceptional circumstances **do not** include:
 - shopping visits
 - care for family members especially younger siblings
 - days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
 - parents' work commitments or business trips
 - holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
 - parental illness
 - **the cost of air tickets/travel abroad**
- **No extended leave will be authorised just before or after a school holiday.**
- Fines will be imposed of £120 per parent, per child should a child be absent for 5 or more unauthorised days.
- Pupils who are absent for 20 days **will be off** rolled and will lose their place at Montem Academy.
- Montem Academy **will contact the local authority** should we have any concerns over a pupil's attendance and where parents are not working with the school to secure improvement.
- Montem Academy will closely monitor medical and dental appointments made during school time - evidence of appointment is required.
- Where it is deemed that a child's education is suffering significantly, pupils will be required to do catch up sessions at lunchtime.
- Attendance plans will be implemented should a child's attendance fall below 90%. Attendance plans are monitored by the Senior Leadership Team.

Montem Academy does appreciate that there are times when it is difficult to get your child to school. We would therefore like to be given the opportunity to be able to work with you to ensure the best outcome for your child, which is to be in school.

I would like to personally thank those parents who ensure that their child/ren are in school regularly. As always the school appreciates your ongoing support and commitment to your child/ren's education. Should you have any questions regarding this letter or your child's attendance please do not hesitate to contact the school office to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely,



Ms A. Probert
Executive Principal

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