



15<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing to inform you that we have revised our procedures and will be working with parents and carers and the East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service to improve attendance and punctuality at Ark Helenswood Academy. This is because research has shown regular attendance and good punctuality are crucial factors in children achieving their full potential. Ark Helenswood Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all, and encouraging our students to strive for excellence. Therefore, for a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of attendance is essential.

We wish to work in partnership with parents and carers and so are seeking your full support in ensuring that your daughter attends the academy every day and on time. We are always pleased to work together with parents/carers in resolving any difficulties but we are also committed to improving attendance levels at Ark Helenswood Academy.

The target attendance figure for all students is **100%**. Based on current attendance figures your daughter will be placed in one of the following groups below. Your daughter will be informed of their attendance group.

<b>Green Group</b>	<b>No Concern</b> The child attends between 97% - 100% of the time.
<b>Yellow Group</b>	<b>Concern</b> The child attends between 95% - 96.9% of the time.
<b>Amber Group</b>	<b>Risk of Underachievement</b> The child attends between 93% - 94.9% of the time.
<b>Pink Group</b>	<b>Severe Risk of Underachievement</b> The child attends between 90% - 92.9% of the time.
<b>Red Group</b>	<b>Extreme Concern</b> The child attends less than 89.9% of the time.

Regular attendance is not just a legal requirement, but it is vital for students to maximize their learning and achieve their full potential here at the Academy. There are a number of important steps that you can take to ensure your daughter maintains a high level of attendance:

- Ensure your daughter attends every day, on time, equipped and ready to learn.
- Ensure the academy has up to date addresses and telephone numbers. We will contact you by text or by telephone if your daughter is absent and you have not contacted the academy. This ensures that we can contact you about your daughter, and also can contact you in an emergency situation.



**PRINCIPAL:** Lucy Monk  
**REGIONAL DIRECTOR:** Mark Phillips

- If your daughter is ill, contact the academy on the **Attendance Line - 01424 757986**. This number is on page 4 of your daughter's Student Journal. Please make sure you phone the academy every day your daughter is absent.
- If no contact is received regarding the absence, it is recorded as **unauthorised**. Ultimately the academy is responsible for deciding if the absence is acceptable or not. Only genuine absence will be authorised. You will be asked to provide medical certificates if your daughter has a poor attendance record.
- Ensure that medical appointments are made outside of academy time. If this is not possible, your daughter needs to register at the academy before they are taken to the medical appointment. We will need to see medical evidence upon return.
- Avoid trivial absence such as, 'buying new shoes'. This would not be accepted as a reasonable absence.
- Holidays should not be taken in term time. There is no automatic right to take your child out of school during term time. From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, government legislation no longer allows headteachers to authorise requests for leave for children to be taken out of school unless there are considered to be exceptional circumstances.

In determining whether or not an absence in such circumstances can be authorised, it is for the headteacher to determine the number of days a child can be away from school *if* the leave is granted. If the absence requested is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, and you nevertheless take your child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised in line with County Council guidance.

**Therefore, in the case of an unauthorised absence the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service will be notified and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Please note that Penalty Notices are issued to *each* parent for *each* child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid this will result in further legal intervention.**

**All absence requests must be completed on the form available on the Academy website, letters will not be accepted. This should be returned to the school a minimum of 14 days *before* the start of the absence.**

- Respond to academy letters or telephone calls regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Speak to your daughter's Tutor or Head of Year if you are experiencing difficulty in getting your daughter into the academy.

Thank you for working in partnership with us to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality at Helenswood Academy.

Yours faithfully



Ms C Farmer  
Vice Principal