

1 October 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

The local authority has asked that I write out to all parents with some key updates on the Covid situation. This seems quite timely as it links with some concerns we have around pupil attendance at this point.

The key message from both ourselves and the local authority is that whilst Covid rates remain high, particularly amongst those aged 11-18, school is open and it is really important that where possible students attend each day. Unfortunately, we do already have a small number of students whose attendance is quite low for this time of year, with them having a number of odd days out of school. In these cases we are writing out to their parents highlighting the concerns and asking them to work with us to improve the situation. But more generally I do want to convey the importance of all students attending school where possible.

There is no doubt that the disruption of the past 18 months has had an impact on student learning and progress and whilst we are very confident that we can overcome these setbacks and help each student to still achieve the grades that we know they are capable of, this can only happen if they are here with us – attending lessons and working with their teachers. So unless your child is significantly ill or has one of the Covid symptoms, please could I make a real plea that they attend school.

To give you some sort of sense of the impact that time out of school could have, the most recent research by the Department for Education showed that:

- Pupils with no absence were 1.3 times more likely to achieve Level 4 or above at GCSE, than pupils that missed just 10-15% of lessons; and
- Pupils with no absence were 3.1 times more likely to achieve Level 5 or higher. (Obviously the impact is greater still in those that have even greater time out of school.)
- Pupils with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs at Grades 9-4 (including English and mathematics) than pupils that missed 15-20% of lessons.
- In the case of pupils with attendance lower than 50%, only 3% manage to achieve 5 or more GCSEs at Grades 9-4 (including maths and English)

To reinforce the point I made earlier, following all of the upheavals of the past year or so we are very confident that we can help every student get back to where they should be in their learning and that they will achieve well if they work with us by attending each day and applying themselves in lessons. Thankfully this is the overwhelming majority of students here at Uffculme School, but I am conscious that with the

winter months approaching it can be hard for students to maintain momentum, which is why I am writing out now to ask for your support.

Please could I ask that you encourage your child to attend whenever they possibly can, unless they are seriously ill, or they have one of the Covid symptoms:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste

Students that might have been in close contact with someone that has had Covid (including a family member or other person in the household) should continue to attend school but should be booked in for a PCR Test as a precaution. They should continue to attend school unless that result comes back as positive.

If you have any questions or concerns about attendance, please do get in contact with us at secretary@uffculmeschool.net Thank you for your support in this matter.

Best wishes



Alan Blackburn
Headteacher