

July 2008

Dear Parent/Carer

Attendance & Punctuality at School

This is the first time the five local headteachers have written a letter to you together. We have taken this unusual step because we feel that attendance and punctuality at school is so very important.

All five schools are working hard to make sure everything we do supports your child's learning at school. We want the best teaching, support and care for all the children of the area.

However something can undermine all we are trying to achieve together. When children arrive late to school or are absent altogether, this damages their education.

Of course sometimes lateness or absence is unavoidable. When a young person is very poorly it would be wrong for them to be in school. If they came into school that would slow down their recovery and even put other children at risk. It is avoidable punctuality or absence that we are writing to you about.

Punctuality

Please ensure your child is at school at the correct time. Missing even five minutes can be a real problem for young people. At the start of the school day we will often explain the day's work or give out important messages. It also gets the children into good habits that will stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives.

The school day starts at the following times:

Darton High School	8:50
Darton Primary School	8:50/9:00
Kexborough Primary School	9:00
Mapplewell Primary School	8:55
Wellgate Primary School	8:50/9:00

Attendance

Good attendance at school is vital. It is important that parents & carers do not keep their children off school for any reason that can be avoided. Most non-urgent medical & dental appointments can be made outside school hours.

Perhaps the biggest worry concerning attendance for the five schools is the number of families taking holidays in term time. We understand that prices are lower then, but we ask you to think about how this will effect your son or daughter's education. Coming back to school after a week or so a boy or girl can find themselves quite lost. A new topic might have been started or everyone else has improved at something.

The five schools have a policy to authorise up to a total (per academic year) of ten days term time holidays in the following circumstances:

- Attendance needs to be 94% or above two weeks prior to the holiday;
- The holiday should not be in the first half term of the school year nor be in the same term as important tests or examinations (e.g. KS2 SATs or GCSEs);
- The parents or carers employers can only release them during term time (and a letter on work-headed paper explaining that this is the case).

Clearly there might be extreme personal circumstances when these rules can be waived by the Headteacher. Please contact the Headteacher if you wish to discuss that.

Where unauthorised holidays take place then all five schools will refer the matter to the Local Authority for a fine. We do that with great reluctance but wish you to understand how important good attendance is.

Finally

Can we thank the vast majority of parents that work so very hard to ensure their children are punctual and have excellent attendance. We know most of you support what we have written in this letter and appreciate that when home & school work together the children will grow up to be responsible young adults.

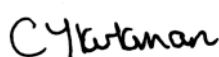
As always if you have any questions about what we have written then do not hesitate to get in touch with us.

With very best wishes.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Parr
Headteacher
Darton Primary School



Mrs Kirkman
Headteacher
Wellgate Primary School



Mrs Harris
Headteacher
Kexborough Primary School



Mrs Galvin
Headteacher
Mapplewell Primary School



Mr Hill
Headteacher
Darton High School