

Viking Academy Trust

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23rd February 2024,

Dear Families,

I am sure you are all very well aware that across Terms 2 and 3 we were greatly affected by a high number of viruses and general winter illnesses. Now that we are heading towards spring, we are very much hoping that those winter bugs are behind us.

These seasonal illnesses have had a larger impact on children's attendance than usual. Therefore, we are concerned about the effect on learning and progress as a result. During the second half of this academic year and beyond, it is vital that if children are physically well enough to be in school, then they are in school. Advice from the NHS is available here: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk).

We are also hugely understanding of the significant impact that mental health and anxiety will have on a child's attendance. If this is something that is affecting your child, it is important for us to explore the ways in which we can help your family. Please get in touch to begin a conversation. If there are any circumstances which are causing you difficulties related to your children coming to school, we want to know so that we can help! Please speak to whoever you are comfortable contacting at school and we can start the process of finding the right support.

Fundamentally, children should be in school and it is our joint responsibility to work together to ensure that children are attending as much as they can. School isn't just about academics for primary aged children, there are many benefits from excellent attendance:

- **Routines:** Daily routines on school days can reduce stress and anxiety for children. Getting to school at the same time every day gives a sense of safety and security for children - they like routines!
- **Engagement:** Being in school means children will make friends and get to know staff. This creates trusting relationships for children which help them thrive.
- **Access to the Fun Stuff:** School isn't just about learning to read and write. School means lots of playtimes, mealtimes with friends, music, art, drama and lots of amazing resources and equipment to play with too.
- **Learning through being with friends:** Learning is most meaningful when it is active and social and that's what primary school is all about!
- **Social Skills and Self-Confidence:** When children spend time away from their families, they build their social network and skills. This allows their sense of self and identity to grow and to be tested out in lots of different scenarios. School provides opportunities for safe exploration. In school, children get a sense of who they are, and how that identity sits alongside everyone else. It helps them to develop a sense of sympathy and empathy and to become independent.

'One Childhood, One Chance'

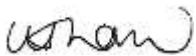


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- **Resilience:** Everyone experiences days where they feel like they don't want to do something, but having to overcome those initial feelings builds the resilience to continue trying. Schools help children to learn to stick at something for a little bit longer.
- **Support:** School provides opportunities for professionals to support children in many different ways. It's also a place where children can feel connected to and feel emotionally supported by their peers.
- **Achievement:** Great attendance means more learning and greater achievement! It also helps with concentration and communication which are important life-skills.

Wishing you all a very healthy term ahead!

Yours Sincerely



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