



West Hatch High School

A Specialist Business and Enterprise School

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Dear Parent/Guardian

Important information regarding online attendance and welfare calls 2021

As we approach the end of our first half term of remote learning this year, I thought it would be a good opportunity to remind you of our online attendance expectations for all pupils at West Hatch High School, as well as our policies and procedures in relation to pupil absence and welfare calls.

While offences for non-attendance in schools have been dis-applied for the time being, from January 7th to 6th February 2021, under section 7 of the Education Act, the Department for Education make it clear that it remains a parent's duty to continue to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education. This is coupled with the *Coronavirus Act 2020 Provision of Remote Education (England)* which makes schools responsible in providing remote education to pupils who are not attending in normal circumstances.

Therefore, I wanted to reiterate attendance to live learning is not optional at West Hatch and all pupils are expected to attend every lesson and engage. The school understands that each family's circumstances and their access to learning material for their children differs, and the responsibility to provide educational support at home can be difficult for families. It is, however, important that pupils remain engaged in education, even when they are not attending the school site. More than ever, we know the routine of remote learning is important for pupils' mental health and in ensuring they do not fall behind their peers nor struggle with lesson content when they return to school.

We continue to be supportive and understanding in situations where there are mitigating issues we are aware of that we can support with. We are acutely aware a small number of our pupils are experiencing difficulty engaging in remote education and we have worked incredibly hard to support families during this time with removing barriers to online provision and/or creating bespoke learning plans for pupils who are especially struggling because of personal circumstances. If, for any reason, you or your child experience difficulties with any remote learning arrangements and you require support from us, please do not hesitate to contact your child's Head of House to discuss alternative arrangements we can offer.

If your child is not able to attend and engage with live lessons, it is important to continue to inform the school of any reason that will prevent your children from attending, providing relevant details for absence recording. Where we have not been able to establish contact with a child and/or parent for a prolonged period of time, we may have concerns about a child's well-being. It is our duty of care to ensure that all children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing from education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. As a consequence we are required to inform the Local Authority and other agencies of concerns about pupils who have been absent from school for 10 continuous school days and where parents have not contacted us to establish the reasons for these absences.



We completely appreciate it can be a challenge to motivate your child to engage with learning, particularly when you have other responsibilities, therefore we do everything we can to support you with home learning, including frequent phone calls, supportive meetings and email dialogue offering alternative support where possible. In rare cases, where a pupil is not responding to support to engage them and they have missed a significant amount of learning over time, a socially distanced home visit is undertaken. This may be followed up by a Senior Leader inviting you and your child to a virtual meeting to discuss next steps about their education, which may involve decisions such as the pupil being withdrawn from the mainstream curriculum as staff are unlikely to have the resources to support them in catching up on months of learning that has been provided online (as it would severely impede on the learning of other pupils). I would like to make clear this would only happen when all supportive options have been exhausted and it is clear that a child is wilfully and persistently breaching the school's behaviour policy in refusing to engage with learning and complete any work.

Finally, as you are very aware, the West Hatch pastoral team is dedicated to looking after our families and our children, and we endeavour to try to help anyone who needs a little more support at times of need. This means that regular check-ins from our team continues to be vital to ensure that we keep everybody safe and their wellbeing positive. If we are unable to reach your child for their bi-weekly welfare call but leave a message asking us to call us back, we would appreciate you returning our call as soon as you can.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daniel Leonard', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel Leonard
Headteacher