

# Parent Partnership

## Autumn Term Focus

November 2006

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to our very first Parent Partnership Focus newsletter. Our aim is to highlight one or two very important issues which we feel will be significant to your son/daughter's education. This term I would like to draw your attention to the importance of regular attendance at school



**gone shopping/  
on holiday?**

**Is your child missing out?**

**Turn over to find out how you can help your child to go to school as often as possible and on time**

### **DID YOU KNOW.....?**

- *The school's attendance target is 96%*
- *90% attendance means missing on average one half day EVERY week*
- *90% attendance means the equivalent of missing four whole weeks in one school year*
- *And that's the equivalent to missing 100 hour long lessons!*
- *But over a full five years, this is the equivalent of missing half a school year!*
- *Missing just 17 days in one year can mean dropping a full grade at GCSE*
- *Only 10% of persistent truants achieve 5 A\*-C passes at GCSE*
- *5 or more GCSE passes can increase wages by 42%*
- *Of pupils with 6.5% absence or less, 75% achieve 5+A\*-C grades at GCSE*
- *Of pupils with 11% absence or more, only 25% achieve 5+A\*-C grades*
- *A child on holiday for 2 weeks during term time will miss 50 one hour lessons. Some never catch up.*

### **Important dates:**

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| • Student monitoring progress reports home    | Fri 24 Nov                 |
| • <b>School closed for staff training day</b> | <b>Fri 1 Dec (all day)</b> |
| • Curriculum Enrichment days                  | Tue 6 & Wed 7 Dec          |
| • Christmas Lunch                             | Thu 14 Dec                 |
| • Rewards/celebration assembly                | Thu 14 Dec(2.00 pm)        |
| • Christmas Concert                           | Mon 18 Dec(7.00 pm)        |
| • <b>Last day of term</b>                     | <b>Wed 20 Dec(3.00 pm)</b> |

# Attendance Issues

## How can I help my child to go to school as often as possible and on time?

If a child is not at school then s/he cannot learn anything! But attendance does not stand alone—it is part of the whole package. Often poor attendance is due to a child being unhappy at school, feeling s/he cannot cope with the work, being tired or being told off for forgetting things.

### Help your child to develop a weekday routine

Sleep is so important and most children do not get enough. Most secondary children should aim for 10 hours sleep a night. Try to develop an evening routine—homework, tea, TV, bath, reading, bed—and try to avoid having a TV in your child's bedroom—it hinders rather than aids sleep.

### Help to develop a morning routine also.

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It speeds up the metabolism and helps children to be more alert at school. Make sure your child wakes in enough time to have breakfast. Make sure and packed lunch and books are organized the night before. Remind your child about PE kit/books/return slips etc.

### Help with a homework routine.

Arrange a table or desk that your child can work from. Make sure s/he has sufficient light and a glass of water—the brain works better when hydrated. Homework is often best done before TV. Take an interest—ask questions, suggest help, allow access to a computer, encourage. Let your child see that you are interested.

### Ask to see your child's planner

Check that homework is written down and if any days are blank. If you're unsure about any aspect of your child's attendance, ask the school for a printout—this is easily done. Ask to see the form tutor or Mrs. Barrett if you are concerned—best done early rather than when its too late!

### Consider the importance of your child's education when you book appointments or holidays.

Where possible, book dental and medical appointments after school; when this is not possible, ensure your child attends school before and after the appointment and let the school know in advance. Although not always possible, try to avoid taking holidays during term time. Where it is totally unavoidable, you must apply to the school for permission in advance—the school has no legal obligation to grant permission where the child's attendance is otherwise excellent. Try to plan such things well in advance and make sure you request details of examination and coursework dates to avoid.

### Don't give in to your child if s/he complains of illness but you see no physical signs.

If you are unsure, send him/her to school with a note of explanation and a contact number should the school need to phone you. You may well find that this works and the number of times it happens reduces. It will help your child to develop the right habits for the world of work where absence and lateness are rarely tolerated. If this continues, ask to meet Mrs. Barrett — It may be an indication that your child is unhappy about something at school.

### Reward your child.

If your child finds it difficult to attend regularly, reward when s/he does. Set a short term target for attendance (eg. attend every day for 2 weeks) and suggest a reward if this is achieved. Most schools will do this also but it is important that your child sees that you consider attendance important too!

### Help your child's school to help you.

When your child is going to be absent for an appointment, always write a note in advance. If your child is ill, phone the school before 8.30 am that morning. The school will contact any home where a child is absent—it allows us to check on the whereabouts of each child and ensure that all pupils are safe. If your child is upset by a bereavement, let the school know so that we can provide support to help.

### Help your child to be successful at school and work.

Even taking a small amount of time out of school can be a problem and your child might fall behind with work and be unable to catch up. A child with a good school record of attendance is setting themselves up for a better future once s/he leaves school. School attendance is always quoted on job and university references.

### Help your child to be safe.

If your child truants and misses school without your knowledge, how will you know that s/he is safe? By informing school about absences, you are helping to keep your child safe. If you believe your child is being bullied, talk about it. Keep talking about it. Make it safe to speak about it. Encourage your child to tell somebody at school—a teacher that s/he trusts. Ensure your child knows that this is the only way to improve things.

### For further information or assistance contact:

**Mrs S Barrett—Key Stage 3 Support Manager ([sbarrett@hillingdongrid.org](mailto:sbarrett@hillingdongrid.org) or 01895 464 064)**