RESILIENCE · RESPECT · INTEGRITY · COMMUNITY
The Ongar Academy, Fyfield Road, Ongar, CM5 0AN
•••
Tel: 01277 500990
Email: communications@theongaracademy.org
Website: www.theongaracademy.org
Headteacher: Mr. J Sands
Deputy Headteacher: Ms. R. Gilbert

19 September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope this letter finds you well, and that you and your families had a wonderful summer break. It is fantastic to see how positive students have returned to The Ongar Academy this year, and I look forward to seeing and hearing about the many success stories and achievements of our students throughout the 2024-2025 academic year.

This letter outlines the process surrounding attendance at The Ongar Academy. Mrs Goulding is our Attendance Officer and is the member of staff you contact for your child's absence via Edulink. Mrs Goulding will also be there to support you, and your child should there be any issues around attending school. Additionally, we have employed five new PALS *(Pastoral and Learning Support)*, who will also be able to provide support with your child's attendance:

PALS:
Year 7 – Mrs C. Dorman
Year 8 – Mrs L. Harwood
Year 9 – Mrs N. Chandler
Year 10 – Miss E. Dorman
Year 11 – Mrs L. Jones

Additionally, support will also be provided by your child's **Head of House**:

House A – Mr S. Talbot
House B - Mr C. Hudgell
House C – Mr S. Talbot
House D - Mr C. Hudgell

We believe in working collaboratively with you and want to provide wrap around care to ensure that all our students achieve their best outcomes.

The Ongar Academy Attendance Process:
Each academic year, every pupil is set a target of 100% attendance, and whilst we know sickness does occur, it is important to share with you the facts surrounding attendance and offer the support they need to be in school as much as possible.

Percentage of Attendance
Above 96%- Outstanding
90-95%- Below Target
Below 90%- Cause for Concern
Below 80%- Serious Cause for Concern

RESILIENCE · RESPECT · INTEGRITY · COMMUNITY
The Ongar Academy, Fyfield Road, Ongar, CM5 0AN
•••
Tel: 01277 500990
Email: communications@theongaracademy.org
Website: www.theongaracademy.org
Headteacher: Mr. J Sands
Deputy Headteacher: Ms. R. Gilbert

I would like to thank you in advance, for your ongoing support with impressing upon your child that **each absence from school results in lost learning time which will affect their academic progress.**

What does your child's attendance percentage mean?

Attendance during school year	Equal days absents	Which is approximately	Number of lessons missed	Impact on GCSE outcomes (approx.)
95%	10 days	2 weeks	50 lessons	On average **-0.1 of grade lower** than expected
90%	19 days	4 weeks	200 lessons	
85%	29 days	6 weeks	300 lessons	On average **half a grade lower** than expected
80%	38 days	8 weeks	400 lessons	
75%	48 days	10 weeks	500 lessons	On average **a grade and half lower** than expected
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	575 lessons	
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks	675 lessons	

Important Reminders:

To ensure that students regularly attend school and are punctual every day, parents and carers should:

- Instil resilience in your child(ren) to attend school every day possible.
- Inform the school as soon as possible on the **first day of absence,** to explain the reason for absence. This should be done via the **Edulink app.**
- Confirm any additional days of absence via Edulink on every subsequent morning of absence.
- If your child is suffering from Chicken Pox or Measles it is important that your child remains away from school whilst they are contagious and that you inform the school as soon as possible that this is the reason for their absence.
- **Provide a written note to the front office to explain the absence when student returns to school, and you may be asked to provide medical evidence** to enable consideration around authorisation of the absence.
- Inform the school when an **appointment** has been made during school time. Such appointments should be **kept to a minimum** and always **requested outside of school time where possible.** Evidence of such appointments is required for the school to be able to authorise the absence.

RESILIENCE · RESPECT · INTEGRITY · COMMUNITY
The Ongar Academy, Fyfield Road, Ongar, CM5 0AN
•••
Tel: 01277 500990
Email: communications@theongaracademy.org
Website: www.theongaracademy.org
Headteacher: Mr. J Sands
Deputy Headteacher: Ms. R. Gilbert

- **Holidays** during term-time are discouraged and permission may be granted only at the Headteachers discretion. Holidays during term time will mostly be recorded as an unauthorised absence which will incur a fine.
- For **religious observance** please contact the school if your child will be absent and provide a note on their return.
-

New for the 2024-2025 academic year:

As a school, we understand that holidays may be more expensive during school holidays compared to term time. Therefore, to help reduce the number of holidays taken during the academic year and to also support you in getting a cheaper holiday this academic year, we will not provide fines for any holidays taken during the four final weeks of the academic year (23 June to 22 July 2025). This will apply if the student has attendance above 95% at the time of the holiday.

What are the benefits of this new attendance initiative?

- GCSE exams finish on June 19, 2025. Therefore Year 11's can still enjoy a cheaper family holiday and not miss out on valuable learning time. What a way to celebrate the end of their exams with their family!
- Younger siblings of GCSE students also benefit from not missing out on learning during key points of the year.
- You get cheaper flights and accommodation and no school fines during this time of the year.

Moving forward, I will write to all parents/carers half-termly to update you on your child's attendance in school. Please note this is just to ensure that you are fully informed of all aspects of your child's education. If the school does have concerns around your child's attendance in school, we will contact you directly. Should you wish to discuss anything further please do not hesitate to contact the school.

I look forward to working with you and supporting your child in achieving outstanding school attendance.
Yours faithfully,

Mr M. Sweeny
Assistant Headteacher – Safeguarding, Attendance and Alt Ed.
The Ongar Academy
'Where Great Things Happen'

Bridge Academy Trust
Ofsted Good Provider
YAMAHA MUSIC LONDON EDUCATION PARTNER
TEACH WELL ALLIANCE GOLD
THE NATIONAL SAFETY CERTIFICATION SCHEME FOR SCHOOLS SafetyMARK
SSAT inquire inspire innovate impact