

5th November 2010

Dear Parent/Carer,

Regular school attendance is essential for all of our students to make good progress, achieve their academic potential and consequently have better chances in life. Every student at Finham Park School, in line with the Governments expectations, is expected to maintain an attendance level of 95% and above. It is the responsibility of everyone in our school community – parents, students, staff and governors to ensure they achieve this. Therefore, we monitor and review the attendance of all students constantly.

Each year there are 190 school days which leaves 175 days for holidays, shopping, birthday treats and non urgent medical and dental appointments. Therefore, the school is very unlikely to authorise absence for these reasons.

Our whole School Attendance Target is 95%. Therefore, if your son or daughter attends for at least 95% of one school year they will have had less than 10 days absent.

Attendance over One School Year

If a student had:

98% attendance = less than 4 days absent from school
95% attendance = less than 10 days absent from school
90% attendance = 4 weeks absent from school
85% attendance = 5 ½ weeks absent from school
80% attendance = 7 ½ weeks absent from school

Attendance over 5 year (Years 7-11) ...

If a student had:

85-90% attendance = having about half a year off school!
80% attendance = 38 weeks off school = one whole school year missed!

We appreciate that children are unwell from time to time and that there can be exceptional circumstances for absences, but we ask that you think carefully about keeping your child out of school. There is a strong connection between attendance and achievement at school. Absence is proven to have a significant negative impact upon a child's educational attainment. The graph below shows how attendance affected the examination results of last year's Year 11. As you can clearly see, the more students attended school the better they achieved and vice versa.

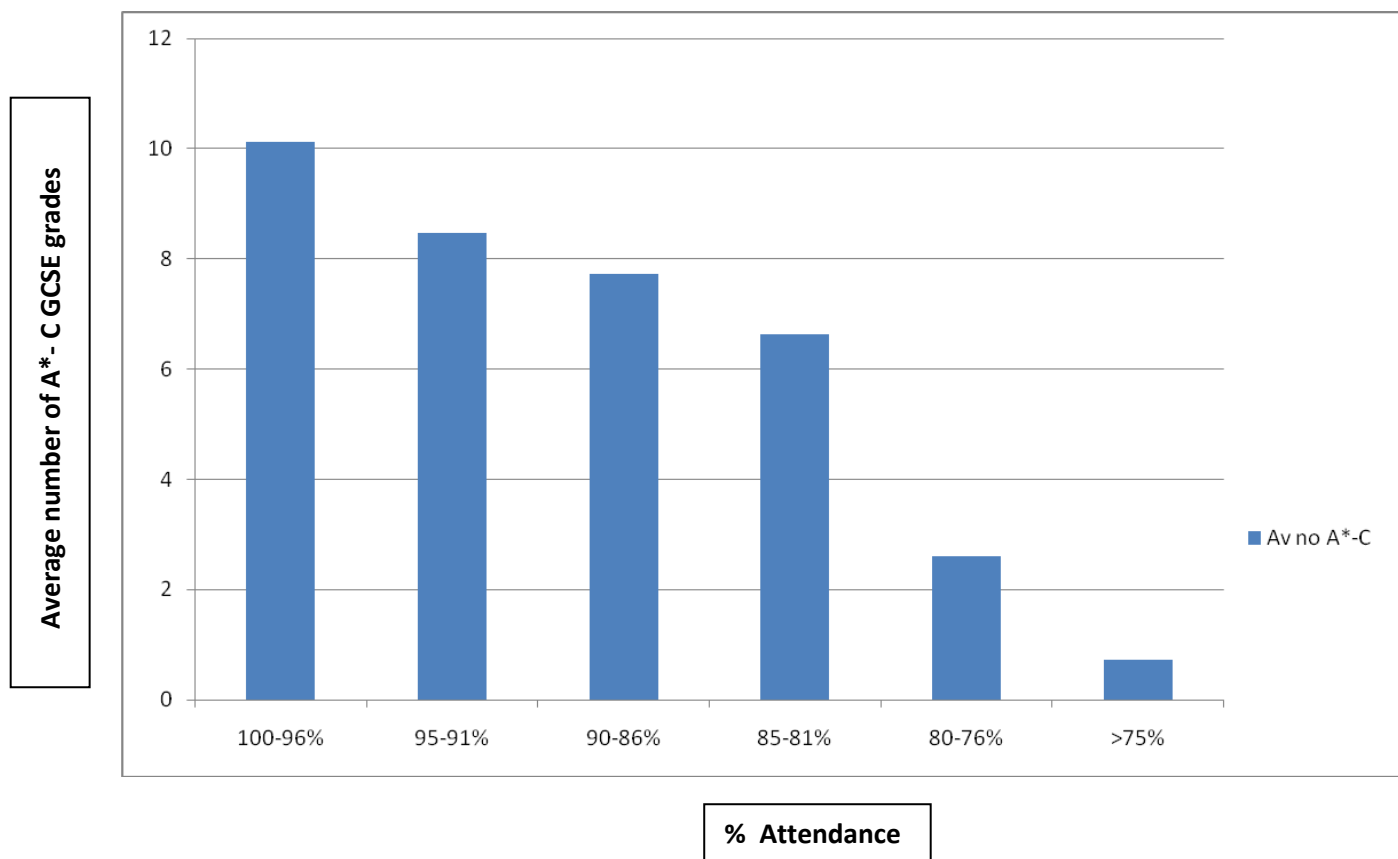
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“Learning For Life”



A graph to show the link between % Attendance and GCSE Results A*-C grades at Finham Park 2009-2010



In addition, regular school attendance keeps children safe, whereas evidence shows that pupils who truant are more likely to be involved in crime and anti social activity.

We hope that you appreciate how crucial good school attendance is to your child's progress, achievement and chances in life and we look forward to working with you to ensure that your child's attendance is the very best it can be to give them the very best chances in school and after it. For your information we have attached a print out of your child's attendance details so far this year. Could you please sign in the School Letters and Newsletters Record section (p.31) of your child's Student Planner to acknowledge that you have received this letter?

If you feel there is anything we can do to support you or your child, or would like to discuss this matter further please do not hesitate to contact your child's Mentor or College Leader. Thank you for your continuing support.

Yours sincerely,

W.Webster
Assistant Headteacher (Support)