"Every Day Counts, Every Child Matters, Every Family Makes a Difference"

Dear Parents and Carers,

At Bridge House School, we know that every child is unique and that attending school can sometimes be challenging, especially for children who have experienced challenges at school previously. We are committed to working closely with families to ensure every child feels safe, supported and able to thrive.

Why Attendance Matters

Good attendance is one of the biggest factors in helping children succeed both academically and emotionally. Children who attend school regularly are more likely to:

- ☑ Build strong friendships and positive relationships
- ☑ Feel part of the school community
- ☑ Develop confidence and resilience
- ☑ Make good academic progress
- ☑ Access the support and interventions they need

A child with **95% attendance** misses around **10 days of school each year**. While 95% is the national attendance expectation, every day missed can mean lost learning, valuable social experiences and important opportunities to grow.

Consistency Helps Children Feel Secure

We understand that there are times when children may struggle with attending school. However, regular routines and consistent attendance often help children feel more secure and confident. Missing a day, particularly due to worries or anxiety, can sometimes make returning feel even harder.

Maintaining attendance wherever possible helps children:

- Keep familiar routines
- Stay connected with trusted adults and friends
- Reduce anxiety about returning
- Build confidence in managing challenges

Managing Medical Appointments

We ask parents and carers to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. However, we understand that some appointments can only be offered during the school day. If this is the case, please inform the school in advance and provide evidence of the appointment. Where possible, children should attend school before and after their appointment to minimise disruption to their learning. As per DFE guidance, any appointments that are NOT evidenced will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Please forward evidence of medical appointments to: **bridgehouseabsence@aspriscs.co.uk**

"Under the Weather"

A little tired or "under the weather" doesn't always mean a day off school. If your child isn't contagious but isn't quite 100%, we'd still love to see them in school, where we can provide a little extra support if needed. Feel free to send us a message and let us know how they're feeling so we can help make their day as comfortable and successful as possible.

Supporting Children with EBSA

We recognise that some pupils experience **Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)** and that school attendance can feel overwhelming at times.

🤝 **You are not alone.**

Our experienced staff are committed to working with families to help children overcome barriers to attendance.

By talking to us early, we can explore support strategies together, such as:

🌟 Gradual transitions into school

🌟 Emotional check-ins and pastoral support

🌟 Adaptations to the school day

🌟 Collaborative planning with parents and carers

The earlier we understand a concern, the sooner we can put support in place.

SMALL steps taken consistently often lead to the BIGGEST successes!

Together We Can Make a Difference

By maintaining open communication and working together, we can help children:

💙 Feel safe

💚 Build confidence

💛 Enjoy learning

❤️ Achieve success

💜 Reach their full potential

If you have any concerns about your child's attendance, wellbeing or school experience, please contact us. We are here to help.

Holidays during Term Time

Department for Education guidance means that holidays during term time cannot normally be authorised. If there is no alternative, please speak to us as early as possible so we can plan accordingly and support your child. Term-time holidays will be considered in line with other absences and are subject to the same attendance rules and procedures.

If Your Child Is Unable to Attend

Please contact school as early as possible on the day of absence, and every day thereafter.

☎️ **Telephone: 01205 369111 (Option 1)**

Please leave a message including:

- Child's name
- Date of birth
- Reason for absence

📧 **Email: bridgehouseabsence@aspriscs.co.uk**

If you are emailing another member of staff regarding an absence, please ensure that you also copy in the attendance email address above. This helps us receive your message promptly if the staff member is unavailable.

Safeguarding Our Pupils

If we do not receive notification of an absence, we will follow up to ensure your child's safety and wellbeing. This may include telephone calls, a home visit, or seeking support from external agencies when appropriate.

Good communication between home and school is one of the most important factors in improving attendance, helping us to understand challenges early and work together to support your child successfully.