

4th September 2026

Dear Parents/Carers

As I am sure you are aware, improving school attendance has been a national educational priority over the last year and has also remained one of our school priorities.

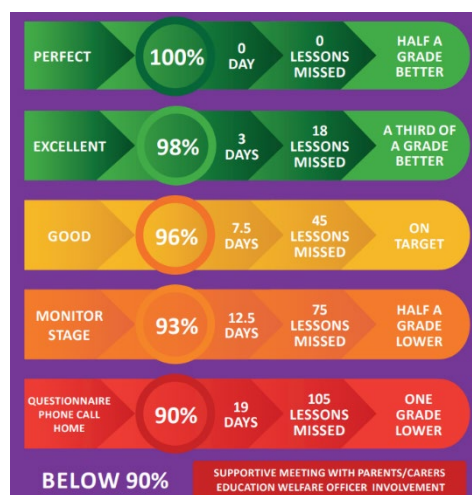
I am pleased to report that attendance in 2025-26 improved compared with the 2024-25 academic year. Attendance improved in every year group compared with the same year group in the previous year. Years 7, 8 and 9 were all above the national attendance level, showing that good progress has been made in these year groups. Persistent absence, which means absence of 10% or more, was below the national average in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. Although we are pleased with the progress made, we are still on an improvement journey. Research clearly shows that students with better attendance perform better in their GCSE examinations. They also have more valuable school experiences, helping them to develop as people.

Over the summer term, our attendance policy has been amended to further support our attendance improvement journey. This policy is available to read on our website <https://www.sheldonschool.co.uk/assets/Documents/Policies/Attendance-policy.pdf>

In summary, we will intervene early when a student's attendance starts to fall. This will involve working closely with students and parents to overcome any barriers that might be causing absence from school.

Holidays in term time cannot be authorised, and we are expected to report these absences to the local authority for consideration of a fine. Full details are available on our website. All leave of absence requests, including those for medical appointments and other exceptional circumstances, should be made through our website using the link below. You will receive an email reply once the application has been considered. In order to reduce impact on attendance figures, it would be really helpful to ensure that your child is in school for the morning and afternoon registration period. For example, if the appointment is at 9.30am, attending school for morning registration and then leaving for the appointment, means that a present mark is registered for that morning session. Equally, if the appointment is in the afternoon, attending the start of period 5, ensures that the afternoon session mark is still recorded as present. <https://www.sheldonschool.co.uk/home/contact/leave-of-absence-requests/>

Attendance percentages can be confusing, as 90% in an examination would usually be considered a good result. In terms of attendance, however, students whose attendance is below 90% are considered to be persistently absent from school. The graphic below shows the number of days of absence associated with different attendance percentages across a school year.



90% attendance across a school year means that the child has missed nearly 4 weeks of school across the school year. This has a big impact on learning.

We fully understand that children become ill. However, when they are only feeling a little under the weather, they should still be encouraged to attend school. If you are unsure whether your child should be kept off school when they are ill, please refer to the NHS guidance, "Is my child too ill for school?" <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

You will have recently received information about logging into our new system, Class Charts. You will be shortly be able to use this to communicate with us about your child's attendance. In the meantime, if your child is too ill to attend school, please let us know by calling 01249 766020, option 2, or by emailing absent@sheldonschool.co.uk.

If your child is struggling to attend school, you will receive an invitation to attend a School Attendance Meeting. These meetings are designed to be supportive and to help us work together to improve school attendance. Supportive strategies will be discussed during the meeting, and a review will then be scheduled.

We will also use a range of rewards to recognise good and improved attendance. More details will be communicated during the school year.

Thank you for continuing to work with us to support strong attendance. Attending school regularly gives students the best opportunity to learn, build confidence and take part fully in school life.

Many thanks for your support.

Yours faithfully

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

John Rumble
Assistant Headteacher
Senior Attendance Champion