

Date: 09/01/2024

Dear Parents/Carers

I would like to wish all our families a Happy New Year and hope that you all enjoyed a restful break over the festive season. It has been a pleasure welcoming your children back to school.

Attendance

You will be aware that this Spring term is a noticeably short one with each half term only lasting 5 weeks. Staff and pupils know that it is vital we therefore make every second count as many of our pupils gear up for assessments and examinations in the near future. For this to be successful, we need every child in school. I make no apologies for 'banging the attendance drum' as regularly as I and our schools do, because quite simply, your child will not reach their full potential if they are not attending school every day of the academic year.

You will have seen via the media, that the government continues to be concerned about low national rates of attendance of young people to school and has, from Monday 8 January, launched a national campaign - **"moments matter, attendance counts"** - to remind parents and carers of the importance of school attendance. The goal is to create a caring and positive bond between parents, carers and school, emphasising the importance attendance has in enhancing a child's overall wellbeing.

The campaign aims to reach those parents and carers whose children are taking odd days of absence, or "avoidable absence," which can add up, rather than children who face greater barriers to attendance, including long term medical needs or special educational needs and disabilities. The government has prepared a toolkit for schools which we will be proactively using trust wide as it is based on clear evidence around the benefits of attendance to school for attainment and mental health and wellbeing. Our message has been clear for a long time, that as well as improving attainment, regular school attendance can facilitate positive peer relationships, which is a protective factor for mental health and wellbeing.

We do however understand that this is not all that is needed to support improving our attendance, but it remains a key priority across all our schools, and we will continue to do all we can to achieve this.

Road Safety

I am hoping that many of you have seen our new road crossing patrol officer who is now in place at the bottom of Sheepwalk Lane to support pupils and parents in safely crossing the road both before and after school. This will mainly support those children attending Airedale Juniors, Airedale Infants and Townville. We are in the process of looking at a patrol officer solely for outside of Airedale Academy to support the larger numbers of pupils in crossing the road safely. We ask that parents and carers support us by parking appropriately when picking up from any of our schools and by encouraging your children to cross the roads safely.

Trust Wide Standards and Expectations

I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents, carers and pupils of the exceptionally high standards we have at Northern Ambition Academies Trust. We will achieve these high standards through a relentless focus, from each and every one of us, on insisting on exceptionally high expectations both in and out of the classroom. We make no excuses and expect the same commitment to these standards from all Trust staff. We are all responsible for keeping standards and expectations high in our schools. It is a mutual responsibility and key to the success of every single young person educated within our Trust.

Uniform

Each school has a clear, consistent policy around school uniform which has been communicated to you and can also be found on all school websites. We aim to instil high standards in our very youngest children to prepare them, the best we can, for their journey through education and, within the world of work. We would ask that you remind yourself of the uniform policy to ensure that your child has the correct uniform every day, including a school bag and equipment.

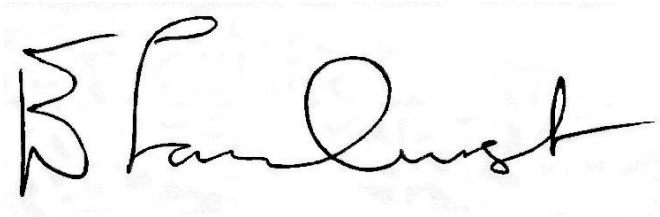
Parent/Carer Voice

Thank you for taking the time to complete our most recent parent/carers survey. This forms part of our important work around the gathering of stakeholder voice and your feedback is very much valued. Where we can, we will act on your feedback and will write to you again to update you on any actions taken as a result.

In order to enable parents/carers to have a voice in the development and improvement of the Trust and its' schools, I am very keen to grow our parent/carers forum further. To date we have held a number of meetings where we have discussed a whole range of issues from uniform to attendance and I would like to thank those parents and carers who are involved. If you are interested in becoming part of this forum, please contact charlotte.hawes@northernambition.org.uk.

I look forward to working with your children over the course of this term and to meeting many of you at various events taking place in our schools.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elizabeth Fairhurst', written in a cursive style.

Elizabeth Fairhurst

Chief Executive

Northern Ambition Academies Trust