



VERULAM SCHOOL

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13th December 2022

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we come to the end of 2022 and what has been a fantastic Autumn term, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the amazing support and commitment you continue to provide the school.

This term has seen a number of exciting trips, guest speakers and rewards take place. In addition, staff and pupils worked collaboratively to put on the first Christmas Production at Verulam for a number of years. A *Christmas Carol* (adapted for the stage by our talented Mr Mackenzie) exhibited everything that is so wonderful about Verulam. A special thank you to Mr Mackenzie, Mrs Tomlin, Mr Phillips and Mrs Barford, who worked tirelessly across the Creative Arts and Technology faculties to create a performance worthy of showcasing the magnificent talent amongst our school community.

I must also give significant recognition to Year 11. We have been impressed with the diligence and maturity that they have exhibited in their first round of mock GCSE examinations. Staff will now be reviewing the papers and providing detailed feedback for your children. Parents will receive a summary of the results and key targets from each subject in January.

As always, the numerous events and achievements of this term will be showcased in the autumn newsletter which will be sent to all stakeholders on the last day of term.

End of term arrangements

The last day of the Autumn term is Wednesday 21st December. Each Year Group will attend a special celebration assembly before being dismissed for the holidays. The Spring term will commence on **Thursday January 5th 2023** for *all* year groups at **8:40 a.m.**

Year	Dismissal time
11	10:50
8 & 9	11:15
10	11:40
7	12:00
12 & 13	12:00

Ofsted Inspection

On the 8th November, Ofsted visited to review our safeguarding practice. The one-day visit looked closely at all aspects of safeguarding, and concluded that **Safeguarding is effective** at Verulam. We are incredibly proud to share this with you.

Some highlights from the report include:

- Leaders ensure that safeguarding is prioritised.
- Leaders ensure that all staff, including governors, receive appropriate, regular safeguarding training.
- Pupils feel safe in the school.
- Pupils are aware of their digital footprint and know not to share personal details on social media platforms.
- The new behaviour policy, in place from September 2022, outlines expected standards of behaviour and the associated rewards and sanctions.
- A new timetable, which includes split break-times and lunch-times, means that the corridors are less crowded.
- Pupils and staff spoken with during the inspection said that pupils' behaviour was better than it had been previously.
- Following an internal review, leaders have identified the need to develop the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme in order to strengthen the wider development of pupils.
- Pupils say that it is fine to be different.
- Pupils attendance is effectively monitored.
- Staff say that leaders are considerate of their workload and supportive of their well-being.

Thank you to all parents/carers that completed the Ofsted survey.

You can read the [full report on our website](#).

HCC LAO Attendance Review

This term, the Local Authority Attendance Officer carried out a review of attendance at Verulam. We are conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in cases where a child is significantly absent, as well as the impact that poor attendance has on a child's academic progress.

Attendance rates for all schools are monitored closely. Post-Covid attendance for many schools has been volatile.

However, we are pleased to share with you that attendance at Verulam has improved significantly and is significantly higher than many other schools in Hertfordshire.

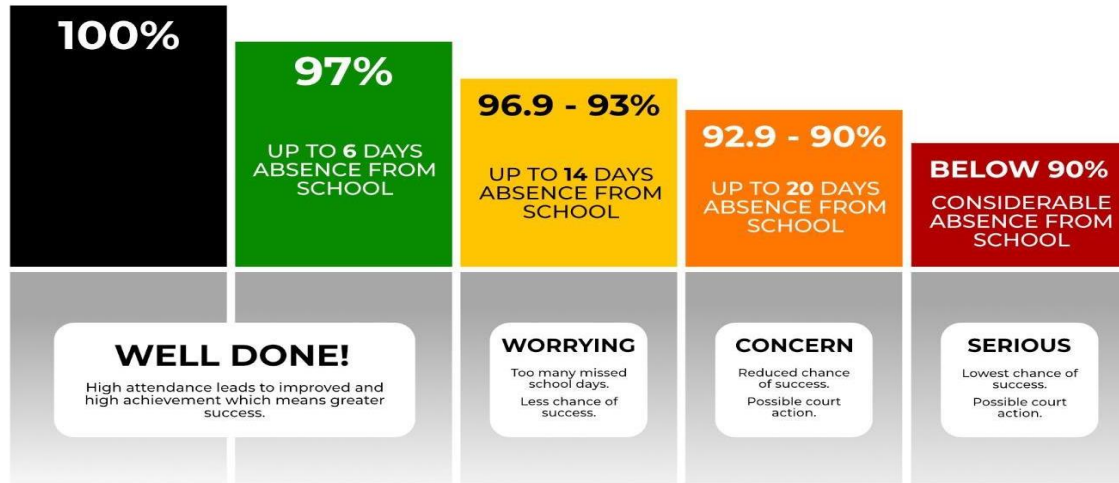
Thank you for your dedication to date in supporting our school attendance to be positive.

The diagram below illustrates the impact that absence can have.

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Staffing Matters

This term we say goodbye to the following staff, and we wish them all the best in the next phase of their career: Mr Holland; Mrs Thomas; Miss Binks; Miss Foster; Mrs Whitehead; Mrs Bedda; Mrs Johnson; Mrs Matyatya; Mrs Rogers; Mr Forsyth.

I would like to welcome the following new members of staff: Mrs Han (Cover Supervisor); Miss Lilly (SEN Administrator); Mrs Bruce (Attendance Officer); Mrs Herrington (Teacher of MFL); Ms Hill (Business Operations Manager); Mrs Novikova (Cover Supervisor); Mrs Barford (LSA); Mr Reeves (LSA); Mr Khan (PE Apprentice); Mrs Shann (Cover Supervisor); Mr Riley (PA to the Headteacher).

Communication with the school

As Headteacher of Verulam, it is my job to ensure that staff, as well as students, are safe, happy, and successful. Therefore, I kindly ask parents when contacting the school either via email or telephone to consider the nature and tone of the communication. At Verulam we are fortunate to have teachers who are experts in their subjects, are experienced practitioners, and are deeply committed to the school; this is also the case for support staff. We value our relationships with our stakeholders, but ask that communication is always respectful, solution focused and succinct.

Uniform

Standards are incredibly important and it is essential that your child has the correct uniform on arrival to school. As we are likely to experience significant cold spells over the winter months, please ensure that your child has a plain dark grey V-neck jumper and a school coat. If you are planning to buy your child a new coat this winter, we recommend opting for a bright colour as they make children more visible to traffic in the dark mornings/afternoons.

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As previously noted, we have started the transition to plain dark grey V-neck jumpers. Please note, other colours, sweatshirts or hooded tops are **not** permitted. Your child is also now able to wear either a plain white shirt (long sleeved or short) with their tie and blazer, or the summer shirt, with a blazer and tie (tucked in) but please note that the summer shirt is being discontinued.

We would also gratefully receive any unwanted uniform that is in good condition for our second-hand uniform shop. Please drop off any items in a clearly labelled bag to the main reception via the Brampton Road entrance.

All that is left for me to say is that I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We would like all of our students to have a well-earned, fun-filled break and hopefully return fully rested.

We look forward to seeing students return to school on Thursday 5th January.

Yours sincerely,



Miss Julie Richardson
Headteacher

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