

27th February 2026

Supporting Attendance and Learning at PRS

Dear Parents and Carers,

A Heartfelt Thank You

As we move through this academic year, I want to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for your continued support. We have seen a noticeable **improvement in overall attendance** across the school, and that is a testament to the hard work you do at home to prioritise your child's education and work with us when there are challenges. When our community works together, our students are the ones who truly thrive. Thank you.

The "Jigsaw Puzzle" of Learning

We often tell our students that education is like building a giant jigsaw puzzle. Every lesson provides a vital piece of the picture. When a student is absent, they return to find several pieces missing, making it much harder to understand how the rest of the "picture" fits together.

While a **90% score** in a test is a fantastic achievement, **90% attendance** actually means a child has missed **10% of their education**. That is half a day every week, or four full weeks of school across the year. It is incredibly difficult for a student to independently catch up on five hours of missed lessons from a single day away.

The Statistics

Research consistently shows that every day counts:

- **Academic Success:** Department for Education (DfE) data shows that students who have 0%–5% absence are **1.3 times more likely** to achieve Grade 5 or above in English and Maths than those who miss 10%–15% of school (DfE, 2022).
- **Closing the Gap:** Consistent attendance is the single most effective way to improve GCSE outcomes, with 84% of students with over 95% attendance achieving 5 or more GCSEs at Grade 4+, compared to only 36% of those who are persistently absent (Children's Commissioner, 2023).

Our Caring Support Team

We know that some mornings are harder than others. At Princes Risborough School (PRS), we are committed to supporting your child's physical and emotional well-being so they feel safe and ready to learn.

- **Medical Support:** Our **Medical Officer** is available throughout the day to support students who feel unwell. Often, a bit of care and a quiet moment are all that's needed to help a student stay at school. The Medical Officer can administer paracetamol and feel free to drop off calpol if your child prefers liquid medicine.
- **Mental Health & Well-being:** Our **Raising Achievement Officers (RAOs)** are dedicated to supporting students struggling with anxiety or mental health during the school day.
- **Soft Starts in S14:** For students who find the morning transition difficult, **classroom S14** offers a "soft start" to the day—a calm, welcoming space to settle in before lessons begin.



- **Attendance Outreach:** Our **Outreach Officer** is always available to discuss specific attendance concerns and find creative solutions for your family.
- **Head of Year Meetings** will be taking place to support children who have attendance of less than 80%.

NHS Guidance: The NHS advises that children can usually attend school with minor illnesses like a common cold or a minor headache. They also emphasise that for children experiencing mild anxiety, maintaining the routine of school is often the best way to manage those feelings. Here are some links to support for Anxiety: [YoungMinds](#) | [Mind UK](#)

New Ways We Are Helping

We are introducing new measures to ensure no child feels overwhelmed after an absence:

1. **Early Outreach:** We want to catch concerns early. Our pastoral staff will be calling parents and carers to check in when a student is off sick, especially where there is a mix of physical and mental health concerns (even if you have called in). **Please do continue to call or email us first thing;** we use those messages to prioritise our calls and ensure we are speaking to the families who need us most. Our Head of Year office will be closed and staff allocated nearby for pastoral help so our RAOs can make contact with you if your child is absent.
2. **One-on-One Return Interviews:** To help students find those "missing jigsaw pieces," for some students, staff will be conducting brief one-on-one check-ins with students returning from illness to see what help they need to get back on track.
3. **Catch-up Support:** Because it is so hard to catch up on five hours of learning independently, we are looking at new ways to provide extra support for those who have missed school. We invite you to **reach out to us** if you are concerned about your child catching up on specific subjects.
4. **Celebrating Success:** We love rewarding consistency! We are continuing our **"Skip the Queue" cards** for students with 100% attendance as a small way to say well done for their dedication.
5. **Increased communication:** Today you will receive an email outlining your child's attendance for the term. You will also receive weekly emails which tell you their attendance this week. We aim to communicate more so that we can work together.
6. **Tutor focus:** Each tutor will have a child that they have identified as needing extra support in school around attendance. They will be making contact with you.

If there is anything making it difficult for your child to attend, please reach out. We would much rather work together on a plan today than see a student struggle tomorrow.

Warmest regards,

Hannah Tongue
Deputy Headteacher

