

Wednesday 10th January 2024

Dear parent / carer

Happy New Year. I wish you and your family a very happy and healthy 2024.

We now have two short half-terms before the Easter break, with lots to pack in before the spring. There is a lot to look forward to in our schools over the next few weeks.

You may have heard in the press about the government's initiative to explain the importance of good attendance, which was launched this week. It is called "Moments matter, attendance counts". It is fair to say the government is concerned that pupils are not attending school as well as they did before the Covid-19 pandemic when schools closed. This is a pattern that is happening in other countries too.

A lot of the government's advice is for schools but there is some useful information for parents too. As a parent of school-age children myself, I found the new guidance from the NHS, stating when it is safe to send them to school or when they should stay at home, really useful. You can find it here:

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

We all became very familiar with the guidance about isolating during the lockdowns but it is now very different. Please take five minutes to have a look through the webpage.

Medical professionals see regular attendance at school as being one of the most important factors in keeping a child healthy, including maintaining good mental health. You may remember the government's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty, from the Downing Street press conferences. He has written this letter to school leaders:

[Letter to school leaders on mild illness and school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Professor Whitty gives advice about respiratory illnesses, anxiety and worry, which you may find useful.



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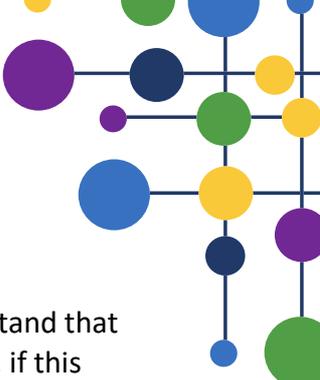
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The government is focusing on reducing absence for relatively minor illnesses but I understand that sometimes the problems can be more serious. Please get in touch with your child's school, if this applies to you. I also understand it can be a big step for a pupil if they are coming back to school after a long absence or lots of periods of absence. We can help. All our academies employ staff who can advise you or offer extra support. Their job is to help, not judge, and they will work out a plan to make coming back to school that bit easier.

Once again, may I take this opportunity to wish you a happy and healthy new year.

Yours faithfully,



John McNally
CEO Share Multi Academy Trust