



## WICKERSLEY SCHOOL AND SPORTS COLLEGE

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**HEADTEACHER:** Mr T Hardcastle

Ref: THA/LHE

1<sup>st</sup> September 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we begin the new school year, I want to take a moment to stress the vital importance of good attendance. The Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson, recently reminded schools and families that every day in school counts – and that absence, even at the very start of the year, can have long-lasting consequences for children.

National data shows just how critical the start of term is: more than half of pupils who missed some of the first week of school last year went on to become persistently absent, compared with just 14% of those who attended every day. In other words, children who start strong are far more likely to keep up good habits, while those who miss days early on are more likely to struggle.

Persistent absence (missing 10% or more of school time) remains one of the biggest challenges in education. Across England, 18–19% of pupils were persistently absent last year – still far higher than before the pandemic. Although attendance has improved since schools re-opened after lockdown, absence rates remain critically high and risk putting the life chances of a generation of young people at stake.

The message is simple:

- **Every day of school missed is a day of learning lost.**
- **Good attendance gives children the best possible start to their education and future life opportunities.**
- **Children who attend regularly achieve better results, make stronger friendships, and develop greater confidence.**

We understand that sometimes absence is unavoidable, such as through illness or medical appointments. Where families face wider difficulties, our school will always take a “support-first” approach, working with you to find solutions. However, we must also remind parents that unauthorised absences – such as term-time holidays – can result in a fine of £80 or more, and most importantly, cause disruption to a child's education and the learning of their peers.



This year, let's work together to give every child at Wickersley School and Sports College, the best possible chance to succeed. Please help us by:

- Ensuring your child attends school every day, on time.
- Avoiding term-time holidays and unnecessary days off.
- Talking to us early if you are experiencing challenges that may affect your child's attendance.

As Bridget Phillipson said: *"Every day of school missed is a day stolen from a child's future."*  
By working together, we can make sure that no child misses out.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Hardcastle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T' and a stylized 'H'.

T Hardcastle  
Headteacher