



South Dartmoor Community College

Executive Head teacher | Mrs J Veal
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Empowering everyone to be the best they can be.

May 2026

Dear Parent / Carer

Attendance Matters

Over the course of last term, attendance at South Dartmoor has risen close to National and Devon figures. This was celebrated with students at the end of the last term during assemblies and through our praise system. We have yet again seen the resilience of our students improve year on year, which has had a direct impact on attendance to school. We are fully aware that school is hard at times for our young people, but the continued support we have seen from parents and carers to make sure their son/daughter is in school every day has been great to see.

Recent data published by the Government has revealed that nationally more than half of pupils who missed some of the first week of any new term went on to become 'persistently' absent in 2024, compared with just 14% of pupils who fully attended their first week of school. Every day of school missed is a day stolen from a child's future.

Holidays and Avoidable Absences in Term Time

At key points during the academic year, we are directed by the Local Authority to remind parents and carers of the expectations around taking holiday within term time. Thankfully, this only happens on rare occasions at South Dartmoor. It is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time. Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the work they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while children of all ages may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.

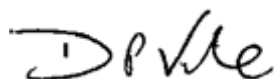
We believe that in order for a pupil to fully benefit from their education, good attendance is crucial. It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement and full attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. If exceptional absence cannot be avoided, you must complete a form and submit it to attendance@southdartmoor where upon the Headteacher will make a decision to accept or refuse based on Local Authority and National policy and guidelines. It is important to note that all penalty charges that are issued go directly to the Local Authority and **not to the school.**

We understand the disappointment that the refusal of a leave request may cause but, as you can appreciate, this policy represents the school's responsibility and commitment towards providing your child's education and supporting their future life opportunities. We hope you will support us by ensuring that your son/daughter obtains the maximum benefit from their time at school by attending punctually for the 188 days each year that the law requires (unless prevented from doing so by an unavoidable circumstance).

Finally, please also be aware that as of **September 2025, 10 unauthorised absences within a 10-weeks** will reach threshold for a penalty notice (stage 4 of the WeST Attendance Policy). Please see the attached the Local Authority guidelines in full regarding term time holidays and our exceptional leave of absence request form.

Thank you for your anticipated support in this matter.

Yours sincerely



Mr D Vile

Assistant Headteacher, Culture
DPV

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