



26 February 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

Over recent years, schools across the country, including our own, have seen a significant decline in student attendance following the pandemic. In response, the Department for Education has made improving school attendance a national priority and has introduced new guidance and expectations for all schools to follow.

At Soham Village College, we know that good attendance is closely linked to students' progress, wellbeing, and future opportunities. To better understand the impact attendance has on outcomes in our school, we recently reviewed the GCSE results of the 799 students who sat English and maths over the past three years. The findings are clear:

- Students with attendance above 95% achieved a pass (grade 4 or above) in English and maths over 90% of the time.
- For students whose attendance fell between 90-95%, the pass rate dropped to just over 70%.
- For those with attendance below 90%, only 50% achieved a pass.

These differences highlight just how important consistent attendance is for students to reach their full potential.

We fully appreciate, however, that some absences are unavoidable. Illness, medical appointments, and genuine circumstances will always occur, and when they do, our teachers will do everything they can to help students catch up with any missed learning. While this support is always available, it is important to acknowledge that catch-up work will never be as effective as being present in lessons whenever possible, where students can benefit from explanations, discussion, and feedback in real time.

New: Additional form tutor support

National guidance recommends that schools pay particular attention to students whose attendance sits between 85% and 95%. Research indicates that students in this range often benefit from regular, low-pressure general support - the kind that form tutors are ideally placed to provide. This type of early intervention can help students feel more connected to school and, in turn, attend more regularly.

With this in mind, we are introducing a new approach to supporting students whose attendance places them in what we are calling the "Danger Zone" (85.0%-94.9%). These students are not necessarily persistently absent, but they are in danger of falling behind or not making the most of their time at Soham Village College if their attendance does not improve. They will receive additional, personalised support from their form tutor. This may include:

- A brief daily check-in to raise any concerns early
- A weekly conversation about how they are getting on
- Light-touch encouragement and guidance to help build consistent routines
- Support in identifying small, achievable attendance goals

Those students who we believe would gain the most from this support will have received a letter in their tutor tray on Thursday morning, explaining the purpose of the programme and what it will look like

day-to-day. If your child did not receive a letter but you feel they would benefit, please let me know and I will ensure their form tutor provides the same support.



Our intention is always to support, not pressure. We want students to understand why attending school regularly is important - for their learning, friendships, and wellbeing - but also to know that we recognise that sometimes absence genuinely cannot be avoided. If your child ever becomes worried about their attendance, please let us know. We have a range of support available, including our Learning Support and Wellbeing teams, form tutors, Student Services and safeguarding staff, who can help students manage worries, rebuild confidence, and feel positive about coming to school.

We appreciate your partnership in helping your child attend school regularly and are grateful for your continued support. If you have any questions about attendance or the new support, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Mr R. Pearce
Assistant Head & School Attendance Champion
Soham Village College