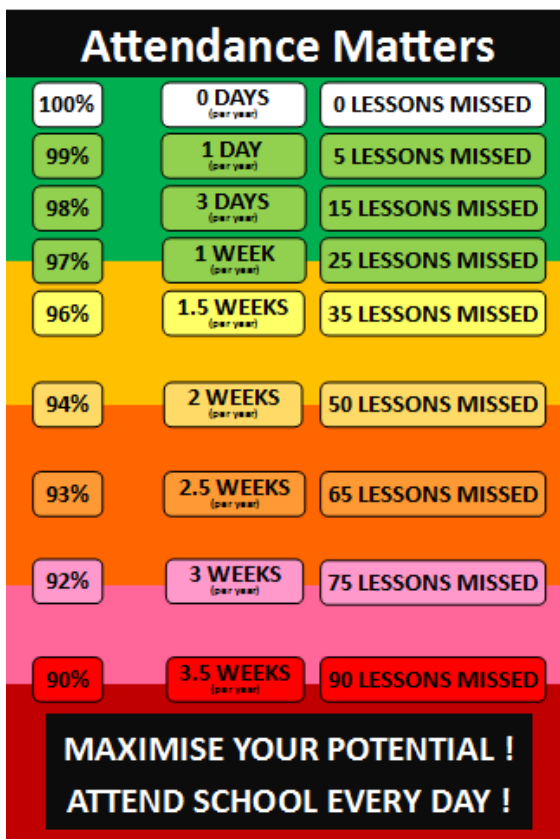


### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

During the height of the pandemic there were many reasons why school attendance fell and there was a genuine understanding as to why pupils may not be in school. Since the full opening up of schools attendance nationally is still considerably below what the previous national attendance figure was, this was between 96% and 97% —currently the national average is between 92% and 93% and each of our schools are wavering around these figures. Improving attendance is a specific area for development stated by Ofsted in their inspection of Calverton. At Central Park, attendance was also raised as an issue in their last inspection. Dersingham currently have the strongest levels of attendance but still well below pre-pandemic levels of attendance.

I came across this table used at another school and it shows how quickly absence days can build into a concerning picture for attendance. I have always used the phrase ‘missing school, missing out’ to illustrate the fact that missed learning will have an impact on life choices. Good attendance is a key way of ensuring that children get the best opportunity in doing well in exams and providing options when ready to leave school.

In recent months, we have appointed a new Attendance Management Officer to the Federation. Mr. Sherwyn Cupido-Weaich is tasked with getting attendance levels back to those higher levels of 96-97%. Within a few weeks we have already seen a small improvement overall in the Federation. If he is in contact with you, it is likely to be because your child’s absence is concerning. Working together we can improve and we want to support you in the best way we can if you are having problems getting your child to school. Working together we may be able to come up with a plan to maximise attendance.



### GOVERNORS IN SCHOOL DAY

Two weeks ago we had our annual Governors in School Day. The Federation Governors split up so a couple could visit each school. They were impressed by what they saw in the school and the quality of the children’s work in their books. As people from all different professional backgrounds they can recognise the huge efforts that are being made to give your children the best quality of education they can.

They also got to meet a handful of parents at the start of the day and appreciated your honesty. It is great to hear from your perspective how things are in the school. There was so much enthusiasm in your comments and how you held each school with positive regard. There is no better compliment than to say you would recommend the school to any parent. Thank you for your support.



### EXTERNAL REVIEWS

The Federation prides itself on not only regularly reviewing the performance of the schools’ themselves but get external perspectives and the opinions of others outside the school. Each school has had a successful ‘school review’ in recent weeks involving people with no real connection to the school—other serving Headteachers and Ofsted Inspectors. We relish the feedback we are given to help us improve. Thankfully each school had a positive outcome but of course they give actions that we can work on to be even better. It is intense but worthwhile.

One Headteacher took the time to send an email after which is worthy of sharing. She had visited Calverton in the Autumn Term and then again last week. She took the time to comment: *“I was impressed by the extraordinary progress of the school. I was delighted to see the positive changes that have been implemented in such a short time.”* Well done to everyone involved.





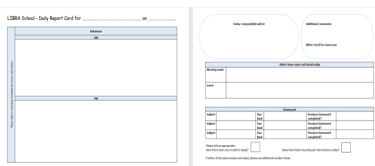
## CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEND)

Whilst each school is fully supportive of inclusion and children with SEND attending mainstream schools there will be challenges in meeting their needs fully. This is frustrating on behalf of you as parents and as school staff. You may be aware that the Local Authority ‘failed’ its’ SEND Inspection and are working hard to make the improvements necessary.

Children with SEND usually need specialist input from various therapists and, especially if they have an EHCP, many targets to work towards. Unfortunately, many of these services are so stretched there is limited time they are in school. Staff do their very best to support children in school but sometimes their workload is stretched also and do not always get the time to give the level of attention each child deserves. We welcome your challenge when you feel we are not meeting the needs of your child but please understand in some of these cases we are waiting for the Local Authority input.

## ANNUAL REPORTS

By the end of the week, you should have received your child’s annual report. As mentioned previously, writing reports now gives everyone a clear idea of the gaps needed to be worked on over the summer term, and the next steps to push on their learning. Once you have read the reports do not hesitate to get in touch with the class teacher should you need help understanding anything or to get more information. They will be happy to arrange a time to discuss your child’s report further and their progress.



## SAFEGUARDING IN SCHOOLS

I am sure you can appreciate, when it comes to safeguarding in schools there is a long list of circumstances we need to ensure we are dealing with, educating children about and procedures to be followed. In schools we refer to the 5R’s of safeguarding:

- ◇ **Recognise**
- ◇ **Respond**
- ◇ **Report**
- ◇ **Record**
- ◇ **Refer**

One more recent worrying concern is the number of children who talk about harming themselves. Whenever, we hear about this we will always make sure you are aware. We know children may sometimes say things in anger, or jest, but when they mention they want to harm themselves it has to be followed up. In some cases this may only involve talking to you as parents but in some cases we do have to alert other services.

Mental health is a vast area—from being moody to stress to more serious medical conditions. Everyone suffers with a level of mental health illness and how well we manage this can result in better mental health or possibly matters escalating.

Firstly, it is always good to talk. School staff will always listen. However managing good mental health can be as simple as making sure you get a good night’s sleep, eating well, relaxing, exercise, etc. Our brains need a frequent recharge!



## EASTER HOLIDAYS

Easter is an important time in the Christian calendar. If you have been partaking in Lent then hopefully you have kept to your promises and continue to do so until Easter weekend. I know some of the schools will be holding their Easter Bonnet Parade at the end of week so get crafting! This year Easter crosses with Ramadan.



With the arrival of Spring and the clocks moving forward it means longer days and periods of fasting—an important pillar of Islam—followed by the festival of Eid. Whichever religion you are observing I do hope you have a peaceful celebration. As ever, I hope you get to spend time together as a family.

We wish you all a safe and fantastic Easter break and schools re-open on Monday 17th April.

Darren Williams, Executive Headteacher