Attendance Parent Forum

Date: 4th November 2026

Focus group: Parents and carers – Years 7–13

Topic: Every Day Matters – Improving student attendance

Rationale: The Parent Attendance Forum was held to strengthen the partnership between families and Rivers Academy in improving attendance and punctuality across Years 7–13. The forum reinforced the importance of regular attendance for academic achievement, wellbeing and future opportunities. It also provided an opportunity for parents to share concerns, discuss barriers to attendance and explore practical solutions. The discussions focused on identifying appropriate support, promoting shared responsibility and agreeing clear actions to improve student attendance and outcomes.

Area of discussion	Notes	Actions
Importance of attendance	Regular attendance supports learning, wellbeing and future opportunities; 90% attendance means 19 missed days annually.	Parents reinforce the message that every day matters and celebrate improvements.
Attendance monitoring	Frequent or repeated absences can create gaps in learning and make returning to the academy more difficult. Early conversations help identify concerns.	The academy will continue to monitor patterns, contact families promptly and offer early support.Parents to use Arbor app to monitor their child's attendance.
Illness and wellbeing	Families discussed illness-related absence, reporting procedures and medical needs.	Issue winter illness guidance and termly reminders; signpost NHS advice and individual support.
Barriers to attendance	Concerns included anxiety, bullying, additional needs, transport and home routines.	Parents to raise concerns promptly to the school so that tailored support can be actioned e.g pastoral or SEND support.
Home routines	Consistent sleep routines, preparing uniform and equipment the night before, a calm morning routine and positive conversations about school can help.	Encourage families to choose one realistic routine to improve and review its impact with their child.
Academy support	Parents should be able to raise concerns early and understand what support is available, including pastoral check-ins and agreed adjustments.	Maintain supportive home–school communication, identify faculty contacts and arrange reviews when needed.
Medical and dental appointments	Parents raised difficulties booking appointments outside school hours and requested acknowledgement of notifications.	Parents email appointment details to attendance@rivers-aspirations.org at least 24 hours in advance, stating collection/travel arrangements. Students should attend before and after where possible and report to the medical room 20 minutes before departure. Attendance team to acknowledge receipt of parent's email.
Illness absence and evidence	Parents queried evidence requirements when GP or hospital messages are unavailable.	Parents may self-certify illness for up to five days (10 sessions per academic year; students should attend when well enough, including part-days where possible and sparingly use the 10 sessions throughout the year.
Lateness and sanctions	Parents raised concerns about late arrival and related detentions. Lessons begin at 8:30am. The academy reinforced high expectations around punctuality as lateness results in missed learning.	Parents to email reasons for lateness. Justified cases may have detentions cancelled, with recurring lateness monitored.
Absence and truancy calls	Some families reported absence calls despite students being on site, and difficulty reaching staff.	Children to ensure that they attend their lessons promptly on the bell so that they are present for the register. Teachers to amend registers to record late arrivals accurately; attendance team to update parents of children in academy. Academy to explore reasons for parents finding it difficult to contact the academy by telephone.
Parent feedback and review	Parents highlighted medical appointments, illness and communication as key challenges.	Agree achievable home–school actions, follow up individual concerns and review attendance progress.