

Friday 6 September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

I am writing to share with you some information about the importance of excellent school attendance specifically in relation to achievement in public exams. I will also share with you some data learned from our A Level and GCSE exams this summer and the impact of attendance on student performance overall.

Before I go into the detail, I know that there is a lot of concern around school attendance nationally. It has been a priority for successive governments and therefore an area of increased focus for schools especially since the pandemic. That has resulted in such things as increases in fines, more involvement of the local authority, the police and social care with families and students. That has, for some, resulted in a degree of ill feeling with being reminded about school attendance when there is so much else going on in their lives including the cost of living, mental health of children and so much more. I know that this communication will be another reminder that may or may not be welcome, but I needed to share with you information specific to Beckfoot and our school community. Having knowledge is so important in my view.

Each year in school we celebrate the hard work of students in August when they come to receive their A Level and GCSE results. The lead up to results days can be challenging with students and parents worrying about what will be in the results envelope on the morning of results day. This year, for the first time, I felt that as a parent of a child who had sat GCSE exams in May and June.

At Beckfoot this summer we were so fortunate to celebrate incredibly strong results with students in Year 13 and Year 11 as they came to open their envelopes and see what they had achieved following twelve (GCSE) or fourteen (A Level) years of academic study. Results matter for each student on those mornings no matter who they are or what they are expecting.

At A Level we achieved the strongest ever results in our history with students achieving the following:

- An average grade of a B
- More students than ever getting into their first-choice university
- More students than ever getting into the top Russell Group universities
- More students gaining places on degree apprenticeship courses including one who secured a highly coveted place with British Rail from thousands of applicants.

GCSE – the best ever progress achieved in the history of Beckfoot School

- 20% of students achieved the top grades 9-7 in both English and maths
- Progress 8 (the measure that we are judged against) score of +0.46 against our previous best of +0.4 in 2022
- More students than ever leaving with the EBAC suite of qualifications (English, maths, two or more sciences, a humanities subject, and a modern foreign language)

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For some, though, the opening of their envelopes brought tears and disappointment. To witness that is horrific for us as teachers and is incredibly distressing for students and families. Unfortunately, too often, the disappointment faced is due to poor attendance and I want to share with you how that has affected students at Beckfoot this summer.

#### **A Level**

At A Level, the difference between a young person being here more that 90% of the time and those who are not is a whole grade, sometimes two. That can be devastating in terms of offers from universities and employers and has affected some of our students this summer.

#### **GCSE**

At GCSE, looking directly at students achieving a 9 to 4 (standard pass) or 9 to 5 (strong pass) we can break a student's attendance against attainment down even further.

<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Achieving English and Maths 9-4</b>	<b>Achieving English and Maths 9-5</b>
95%	85%	72%
90%	77%	52%
80%	63%	32%
70%	33%	22%
50%	14%	0%

The table shows clearly that being at school makes a huge difference to a young person's chances of reaching their potential. Being in lessons is the thing that make the biggest difference at Beckfoot.

I want you to know that this letter is well intentioned. I care deeply about our students, and I know that they get one shot at education. I know that having knowledge gives a young person power. Not having knowledge means they will always depend on those that have it and I worry about that for each and every Beckfoot child. They are entitled to a good life and education matters to help them have that. Hence why I am writing.

If you wish to explore this more with me then please let me know. I would be really happy to chat through my thoughts with you if it would help.

Yours sincerely



**Simon Wade**  
Headteacher