

## Principal's Message – week ending 31 01 20

Dear Families

I am often asked by parents what they can do to help their child **do well** at school. This is, clearly, a tricky question because there are so many things that can affect **how well** a young person does at school: their home circumstances, their health – mental and physical - their attendance, how hard they work, how well they're taught, the amount of homework they get and do, and so on. However, it would also be wrong to say that parents have no part to play – as parents, we can certainly make a positive difference; we have to believe that! So here's my Part 1 suggestions, which I hope you will find useful – you may well find them comforting because you already do all of them!

### How can I help my child do well at school? Part 1

1. **Take an interest day-to-day:** what did you do today at school? Tell me some things you did/learned. What was your favourite lesson? Persevere when all you get is a grunt or 'dunno' in response (I know this well, as a parent of two teenagers myself!). Your day-to-day interest is crucial because the message for young people is that education matters – a lot!
2. **Remind your child regularly that having high attendance matters:** it's very hard to learn your GCSE Science if you aren't at school and there is plenty of evidence that links high attendance with high achievement and low attendance with low achievement. Students should be aiming for 100% and certainly not settling for anything less than 97%!
3. **Aim to create good conditions at home that support your child's good achievement at school:** that's about good routines such as having family meals where you talk about the day at school amongst other things, getting uniform and equipment ready, going to bed at a reasonable time and so on
4. **Keep in touch with school:** attending parents' evenings, reading relevant information sent to you by the school, contacting the right person at school quickly if you have a concern – these are all part of us seeing young people's schooling as a partnership that matters
5. **Do some school-related work regularly with your child:** I know some parents, perhaps many parents, feel they can't help with the specifics of school work, but you definitely can help in some ways that make a difference – and that will be the meat of Part 2, next week!

Kind regards

Mark Patterson  
Principal