ERASMUS DARWIN ACADEMY

Primitas Learning Partnership | Consultation Collaboration Support

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Dear Families,

Children only get one chance at their education. Everyday attendance in school matters.

At Erasmus Darwin Academy, we are proud of our students and the commitment that so many families show in supporting excellent attendance. At the end of last academic year (2025/26) our attendance currently sits at **92.2%**, which is above the national average for secondary schools of **91.5%**. Whilst this is encouraging, our data also shows that **23.5% of students are persistently absent**, meaning they have missed 10% or more of their schooling. As a school, we know that improving attendance is one of the most powerful ways we can help every child succeed.

What the evidence tells us

National research consistently shows that pupils who attend school regularly achieve better outcomes than those who do not. Good attendance is linked to:

- Higher attainment and examination success.
- Better wellbeing and stronger friendships.
- Improved confidence and resilience.
- Greater opportunities in further education, training and employment.

Small absences have a big impact

It can be easy to think that a day here or there does not make a difference, but the impact accumulates quickly:

Attendance	Days missed over a school year
100%	0 days
95%	Approximately 10 days
90%	Approximately 19 days
85%	Approximately 29 days
80%	Approximately 38 days

A student with 90% attendance misses nearly four weeks of learning each year. Over five years of secondary education, this equates to almost half a year of schooling.

What our school data tells us

The Department for Education compares our attendance with a group of schools that have very similar characteristics to our own. The comparison shows that while our overall attendance is slightly higher than the average of similar schools, there is still room for improvement. We are currently ranked 9th out of 21 similar schools for overall attendance, but 15th out of 21 for persistent absence. Perhaps most importantly, the report demonstrates that schools working in circumstances very similar to ours are achieving stronger outcomes. If we could match attendance levels achieved elsewhere within our comparison group, our overall attendance would increase from **92.2% to 93%**, and persistent absence would reduce significantly.

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This tells us something really important:

Better attendance is achievable.

The power of one extra percentage point
The Department for Education has identified an attendance improvement target for our school of one percentage point over the next three years. While this may sound small, the impact is enormous. Achieving this improvement would give students at Erasmus Darwin Academy at least 1,848 additional days of learning in school. That represents thousands of extra lessons, conversations, experiences and opportunities for our young people.

What we need from our Families
You play the most important role in supporting attendance. We know that most absences do not happen because families do not care. There can be genuine challenges including illness, anxiety, friendship difficulties, family circumstances or other barriers.

However, we also know that the earlier attendance concerns are addressed, the easier they are to resolve.

Families can help by:

- Establishing consistent morning and evening routines.
- Encouraging attendance unless your child is genuinely too unwell to attend.
- Booking appointments outside school hours wherever possible.
- Avoiding holidays during term time.
- Contacting us early if your child is finding attendance difficult.
- Working in partnership with the school when support is offered.

We're here to help
Improving attendance is not about blame; it is about partnership. It is about ensuring that every child has access to the education they deserve.

The comparison with schools similar to ours shows that stronger attendance is possible and that every improvement can have a lasting impact on students' achievement, wellbeing and future opportunities.

Together, we can ensure that more young people attend regularly, achieve highly and make the very most of their time at Erasmus Darwin Academy.

Thank you for your continued support.
Yours sincerely,

Mrs Conolly
Deputy Headteacher