



Our reference: Welcome to Y7 Wigan
Your reference:
Please ask for: Cath Pealing
Extension: 89453
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Date: 27th August 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian

We are thrilled that your child will be starting secondary school within Wigan in September, and we wanted to extend a warm welcome to both you and to them! Secondary school is an exciting new step in their life, but we also know that leaving primary school is a big change. We want to support you and your child with this so that they can be in school every day and get the best chance to experience all the educational, extra-curricular and social benefits school can bring.

We want to help everyone in our Wigan schools understand what good attendance looks like. The definition of good attendance in Wigan is 98% or better. Some would say 90% is good attendance - In a test, scoring 90% would be great, but this isn't the same for attendance. In fact, 90% attendance is equivalent to missing one day of school every fortnight! That is 19 days across a year missed or, in other words, almost a month of school!

The first week at a new school is really important. It allows your child to meet their teachers, make new friends, get their head around new school rules and learn to navigate their way around their new school buildings. Did you know that children who had an unauthorised absence on any day in the first week of term, on average go on to miss a quarter of the school year with attendance rates of 75% compared to children who don't miss a day in the first week having on average 98% attendance. This shows just how important attending every day in the first week is.

In addition, children who attend school more regularly are far more likely to go on to further education, training or employment when they finish Year 11 than those who have less than 90% attendance in year 10 and 11.

We do know that attending school can be a challenge at times, so we wanted to share some resources available to support you and your child in their transition from primary to secondary school. These include:

- The local offer for special educational needs and disabilities
[SEND Local Offer \(wigan.gov.uk\)](https://www.wigan.gov.uk)
- Community based family hubs, where you can access support, advice and guidance
[Family Hubs \(wigan.gov.uk\)](https://www.wigan.gov.uk)
- A local directory of support services and activities in your area
[Our Town Directory \(wigan.gov.uk\)](https://www.wigan.gov.uk)

- An NHS guide to mild childhood illness [_Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health/a-z/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/)
- An NHS guide to supporting anxiety [Anxiety in children - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health/a-z/anxiety-in-children/)

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Useful Resources

- [EBSA Parent Information Sheet](#)
- [EBSA Young Person Sheet](#)

For more information about emotional wellbeing and how to support your child, the following resources may be helpful:

- Wigan Family Welfare – offer counselling and parent/young person advocacy service.
- www.youngminds.org.uk (provides information online, including a page on 'school refusal')
- www.mind.org/information-support/for-children-and-young-people (lots of information online)
- www.wigan.gov.uk/LINC2/survival-guide/survival-guide (information and advice from young people and professionals and a guide to local services in Wigan)
- Stuff That Sucks: Accepting what you can't change and committing to what you can. Book by Ben Sedley.
- <https://book.languageoflistening.com> (A really free e-book which talks through how to coach emotions.

You may want to consider a back-to-school checklist. (inc. stationery requirements) There are lots of checklists online, including some that can be printed as posters, to encourage your child to take responsibility for their own school organisation.

Other support available will be available through your new school, please don't hesitate to contact them for support if you have concerns around your child's attendance before they start their new school or after they have started. Working together to improve and support attendance is essential, if schools don't understand why a child may not be attending, they may not be able to offer the right support.

We want to make the transition to secondary school as smooth as possible, so please get in touch with your child's new school if you have any questions or concerns. If you are unsure of how to get help or have further worries, you can contact send an email to: AttendanceServiceA&G@wigan.gov.uk

We can't wait to see your child on the first day of school in September!

Warmest regards

Cath Pealing



Assistant Director - Education