



20th December 2022

What is the number 1 thing you can do to help your child be successful in January?

Dear parent/carer,

I hope you and your family are well as we enter the Christmas period. I would like to start by thanking you for the tremendous support you have given during this term. We have continued to make huge improvements. In October we got official confirmation that our GCSE results, in the summer, were the best in the school's history. Our progress 8 score of +0.39 was the third highest in County Durham. This is something that we are very proud of, taking into account we were bottom of the County in 2018! However, we know that we can still achieve more.

When I was analysing the results, I was shocked to see the impact of attendance on GCSE results. Whilst I knew it was important, based on this table from National data, I didn't expect it to have such a big impact on Tanfield students' chances of success.

Attendance	Days Missed Per Year	Weeks Missed Per Year	% Chance of Achieving 5 Grade 5-9
100%	0	0	94.8%
95%	5	1	74.3%
90%	15	3	34.7%
89% and below	17.5 plus	3.5 plus	26.7%

This table is specific to our students from last year:

Attendance	Progress 8
95% and above	+1.02 (65)
90% to 94.9%	+0.59 (33)
51% to 89%	-0.46 (43)
Under 50%	-1.32 (5)

This data shows that students who had attendance above 95% achieved one grade higher, in every subject, than they should have based on the national average. If all students achieved this, we would have been in the top 1% of schools in the country. 90-94.9% attendance led to students losing half a grade, per subject, on average and attendance below 90% meant that students performed significantly worse than the national average.

Therefore, the number one thing you can do in the New Year, to help your child be successful, is to ensure that your child attends school every day. If your child is in school 100% of the time, on time, they will leave Tanfield School with the results they need to reach their goals.

Whilst all of our year groups have worked exceptionally hard this term, we are particularly proud of our year 11 students. They have completed 7009 extra hours of learning, by attending Get Exam Ready each evening, at an average of 48.7 hours per student. They have also carried out 1485.5 hours of HegartyMaths and completed 83,416 questions. This is better than last year and is a reason why we are confident that they will achieve an amazing set of results..

Return to school arrangements after Christmas

All students are to return to school by 8.35am on Thursday 5th January.

Support during the cost of living crisis

We know that many families are going through a tough time this winter and we want to do everything we can to help you and your child. If you're struggling with your finances, please get in touch to let us know, as there may be things we can suggest which will help. Please use the help@tanfieldschool.co.uk email address.

The following are some things that you may be able to do:

Contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau

You don't have to be a UK citizen to get support from your local CAB, you just need to be a resident of the local area. The CAB can help you with:

- Getting benefits or organising other financial support
- Accessing support for essential costs (food, bills, rent)

Visit the [Citizens Advice website](#) or contact your local branch to book an appointment. Insert contact details of your local CAB here: [The Venue Wear Road, STANLEY, DH9 6LU](#)

Check you're paying the right amount of tax

Make sure you're on the right tax code. If you aren't you might be due a refund. Use the [Money Saving Expert's](#) free tax code calculator to find out.

Claim any benefits you're entitled to

Use 1 of these benefits calculators to determine whether there are any benefits you could be claiming:

- [Turn2us](#)
- [Policy in Practice](#)

- [Support for migrant families](#) – use this calculator if you are a migrant family, or if you have no recourse to public funds (meaning you're not entitled to the majority of welfare benefits)

You may be able to get benefits paid early if you need cash urgently – this is known as 'a short-term benefit advance'. You will need to contact the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) office that's dealing with your claim.

Check you've received all the government's cost-of-living payments

The government's cost-of-living payments are available for those receiving certain benefits or tax credits. You don't need to apply for these – if you're eligible the money should go straight into your account.

If you think you're due a payment but haven't received one, [report a missing payment to the government here](#).

Be aware of scams! If you receive any emails, texts or phone calls asking you to fill in an application form or asking for your bank details to receive a cost-of-living payment, do not talk to them or send a reply. Get more information on cost-of-living scams on the [Money Saving Expert's website](#).

Find out what help you can get with your energy bills

Take a look at these resources from the [British Gas Energy Trust](#) and the [Money Saving Expert](#).

Check if your child is entitled to free school meals (FSM)

If your child is eligible for FSM you will need to get them registered. This will allow them to get a free meal at school, and we'll get extra funding (known as the pupil premium) to support your child's learning.

Go to this [government website](#) to check if your child is eligible. If they are, or if you're not sure, please send your child's full name, your full name, date of birth and National Insurance number to the help@tanfieldschool.co.uk and we will contact the local authority on your behalf.

Get free or low-cost food

If you're worried about not having enough food to feed your family, you're not alone. There are a number of places offering support.

- If you have a child under 4, and meet the eligibility criteria, you may be entitled to [healthy start food vouchers](#)
- Find your local food bank here: [Bankuet](#), [The Independent Food Aid Network](#), [the Trussell Trust](#), or your [local community fridge](#)
- Use food waste apps and websites like [Olio](#) (for free food and household items from your local community), [Too Good To Go](#) (for low-cost food from local restaurants), or [Low Price Foods](#) (food that has passed its best before date, but is still safe to eat)
- Become a member of a community shop. These organisations sell food to their members at a reduced price. Some shops are free to join if you meet certain criteria, and others ask for a small contribution. Find out if there's one near you by checking this website: [Community Shop](#),
- Get more tips on free and cheap meals from [Which](#)

Replace or repair household items at a low cost or for free

Check if you can get broken household goods replaced or repaired by your local community.

Get free household goods on [Freecycle](#)
Get help with DIY repairs at a [Repair Cafe](#)

Find a warm space to beat the chill

Some community spaces open their doors to provide a safe and warm space for a few hours. Many also offer hot drinks and wifi.

Find a warm bank on:

[Warm Welcome](#)

[Warm Spaces](#)

Finally, I hope that you all have a very enjoyable and safe Christmas break and we look forward to another exciting and safe term on our return at 8.35am on January 5th 2023.

Yours sincerely



Mr S Clough
Headteacher

