

Friday Focus

Friday 11th September 2026



Dartmoor
Multi Academy
Trust

...everyone in our Trust.



It has been a great week at Okehampton College. I have enjoyed speaking with students and hearing about their summer breaks. It sounds like everyone had a great summer and enjoyed the amazing weather we had. School attendance this week has been fantastic with over 95% of students attending each day. We are having an even bigger push on student attendance this year and tutors will be in touch to offer support if students are missing school.

This week I have delivered assemblies to all students. I like to use stories or talk about music that means something to me in assemblies. I believe that this helps me to convey a message to students and I get to speak about my passions. This week I spoke about students looking out for one another and being a good friend. Noticing when someone is feeling down or withdrawn and reaching out to them. I also spoke about kindness and good manners to help make everyone feel better. When I did my second year 7 assembly, I was really touched when nearly every student greeted me and said good morning. It was wonderful and really showed me that they understood about the values at our college.

We hold Meet the Tutor evening every September and we will be writing home shortly to all parents to inform you about how you can book an appointment with your child's tutor. It will be held on Thursday 24th September and it will be in school in your child's tutor room. We are looking for more parents to join our governors. Some of our governors will be at the evening to both speak with parents and also to speak to anyone interested in joining.

This year's curriculum enrichment week was incredibly successful. I know from speaking with some parents that they would like the 'book' earlier. We are already meeting to look at what trips will be available so we can give parents plenty of notice about what we will have on offer. We hope for this to be out next month and as normal we will be asking for a deposit at time of booking.

We are currently making preparations for our traditional whole school walk on Dartmoor. We will be doing this on Friday 25th September. It is a wonderful event and I look forward to seeing the students working together and encouraging one another.

Free School Meals

If your child qualifies for free school meals an allowance of £2.66 will be added to their Gateway account each day. However, please be aware that it is the responsibility of the students themselves to manage how they spend this and to make good choices. We recommend using the meal deal options to ensure a substantial meal and to bring a refillable water bottle so drinks do not need to be purchased. Menus and prices have been shared in an email this week.

If you have a query regarding Free School Meals eligibility Devon County Council has issued guidance - please log in to the [Devon Citizens Portal](#) and click "Messages" on the home screen. Please take a screenshot of the eligibility result message for your child and send it to the school. If you have more than one child, please provide a screenshot for each claim. Ensure that the date, child's name, and claim type (Targeted or Expanded) are clearly visible.



Arbor

The Arbor Parent App

The Arbor Parent App is a really useful tool for supporting your child's school life. It allows you to view daily timetables, keep track of attendance and behaviour, receive key notices, and manage bookings, trips and payments – all in one place.

To help you get the most out of Arbor, we have created a dedicated page on our website with two short help videos:

- one showing how to use Arbor via a web browser
- one demonstrating how to use the mobile app

Please visit our support page [here](#):

If you would like to download the Arbor Parent App, you can do so here:

- Download for Android (Google Play)
- Download for iPhone (Apple App Store)

You can also access Arbor through a web browser using the Parent Portal, which allows the same login and functionality on a computer or device.

We encourage all families to familiarise themselves with Arbor, as it is an important way to stay up to date with your child's learning, timetable and key school information.



Support Mrs Teixeira's Three Peaks Challenge Fundraiser

Support Mrs Teixeira's Three Peaks Challenge Fundraiser
We are delighted to share that Mrs Teixeira will be joining a dedicated team of parents, family members and friends to take on the National Three Peaks Challenge.

The Three Peaks Challenge is one of the UK's most demanding fundraising events, involving the ascent of the three highest mountains in Scotland, England and Wales: Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon (Yr Wyddfa). The challenge is to climb all three mountains within 24 hours, requiring determination, teamwork, resilience and many miles of walking, including Scafell Pike through the night! Just to give you some idea, Mrs T will be covering around 24 miles of walking, over 3,000 metres of ascent, and approximately 13 hours of mountain hiking, all within a demanding 24-hour period.

Mrs T and the team are raising funds to help support an exciting guiding inter-railing trip. In order to make the cost of the trip affordable enough for as many girls as possible to participate, the Guides have committed to raising between £7,500 and £9,000.

A wide range of fundraising activities are already underway and you can sign up for:

- Craft workshops
- Christmas wreath-making
- Festive table decoration workshops
- Wooden duck painting sessions
- A parent-organised coffee morning
- Cake sales organised by the girls themselves

Alongside these events, a team of 7 parents, family members and friends will be undertaking the Three Peaks Challenge and are currently seeking sponsorship. Any contribution, no matter how small, would be greatly appreciated and will help ensure more girls can benefit from this wonderful opportunity.

The Guides can be followed online through:

- Facebook & Instagram: Girlguiding Okehampton
- Website: www.girlguiding-okehampton.org.uk

Corporate sponsorship is also welcomed. Businesses supporting the fundraising campaign will be recognised across the Guides' social media platforms and website, and sponsorship opportunities on team T-shirts and hoodies can also be discussed.



How to Donate

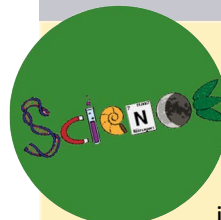
Donations can be made through the group's [JustGiving page](#), or bank details can be provided upon request.

Thank you for supporting Mrs Teixeira and the fundraising team as they take on this incredible challenge. Your generosity will help make a memorable and enriching experience possible for many girls.

Good luck, Mrs Teixeira, and everyone taking part in the Three Peaks Challenge!



Click below to learn about instrumental tuition at Okehampton College.



Science House Competitions

Science House Competitions start on Monday 21 September! Look out for more information and challenge yourself to take part and earn points for your House.

House points will also be awarded for the house that raises the most money for charity through the sponsored walk. Details of the chosen charities will be announced soon, so watch this space.

May the best House win!



Special Educational Needs
& Disabilities

Parent Support

We are excited to welcome the Devon Parent Carer Service to Okehampton College to offer support to local parents and carers. Families with primary and secondary aged children are welcome.

Join the first session on Thursday 24 September 2026 at 10:00am. Please meet in Reception when you arrive.

The service, delivered by Westbank Community Health and Care, is available to parents and carers of children under 18 with SEND, long-term health conditions, learning disabilities, or mental health difficulties. Families do not need to have a formal diagnosis to access support.

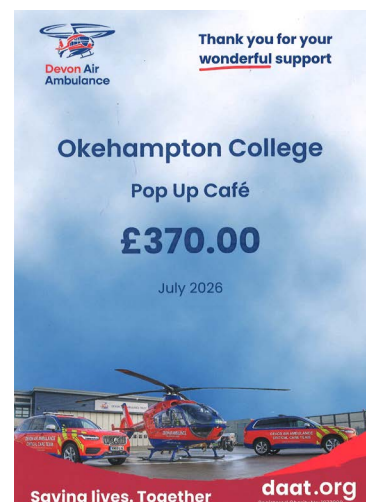
Whether you are looking for advice, information, or simply the opportunity to connect with others, you will be warmly welcomed

A Special Thank You from Devon Air Ambulance



We were delighted to receive a thank-you letter from Devon Air Ambulance after raising an amazing £370 for the charity in the pop-up cafe, during enrichment week. Our donation will help its dedicated team continue providing lifesaving care across Devon.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported our fundraising and helped make this achievement possible, especially our chef team of students that week who made some excellent dishes and bakes to sell.



Come and see for yourself! Okehampton College Open Evening on Wednesday 30th September 2026 4:15 - 6:30pm

Join us for presentations and tours at 4:30pm, 5:00pm and 5:30pm
(booking is essential)

Use the QR code to secure a place for your preferred presentation or contact us by email or telephone:

- Tel: 01837 650910
- email: admin@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk



Open
Mornings
also
available



- Tuesday 6th October 9.15am
- Wednesday 7th October 9.15am
- Thursday 8th October 10.15am
- Monday 12th October 9.15am
- Tuesday 13th October 10.15am

(Please call 01837 650910 to book)



The Oke Way

We care - We challenge - We thrive

Importance Attendance News

This is an important update about school attendance procedures for the 2025/2026 academic year.

We really want to work with our students, families and community partners to ensure every child has access to a fantastic education through regular attendance at school. Children with attendance over 97% will benefit academically, as well as socially and emotionally.

Your efforts, working in partnership with the school, will ensure that your child will have the best chance to achieve their academic potential and develop positive relationships with their peers and the adults who are there to support them, this in turn will positively impact their resilience and wellbeing.

- Regular attendance (97% and above) enables your child to;
- access the lessons needed to achieve their expected grades
- maintain friendships and develop new ones
- have access to social and sporting events offered by the school
- explore potential life skills
- develop work habits such as good punctuality which are essential to thrive in the world of employment

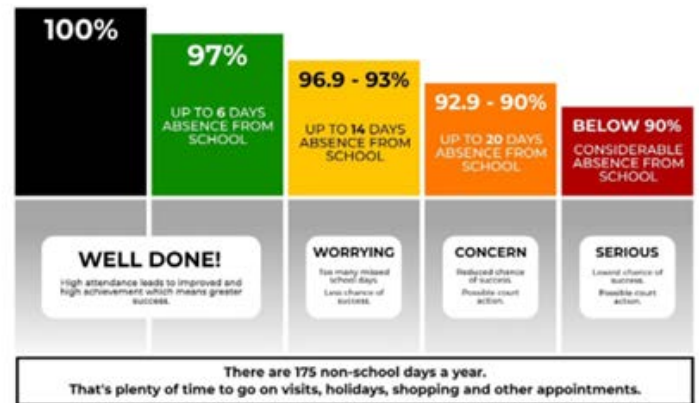
If you are worried about your child/children's attendance, the first port of call is to discuss your concerns with the school directly. Most difficulties relating to absence can be dealt with quickly and promptly by in-school support, and all schools work closely with Early Help, health and the local authority teams who may also be able to help if needed. We are committed to supporting you so it's important you contact us as soon as possible if you have any concerns you would like to discuss.

We are committed to developing positive, open, and effective communication between home and school and providing support, advice and guidance for parents/carers and pupils when needed.

In order to do this, we will regularly be communicating with families about their child's attendance in several ways, including;

- Regular attendance focus on newsletters to share important information and updates.
- Every parent/carer will be informed about their child's attendance by email twice each half term - we would really appreciate your support in talking to your child about their attendance and celebrating with them when they have consistently been in school every day, or when they have tried really hard to improve their attendance.
- Your child's Class teacher/form tutor may contact you to ensure everything is OK and offer support following any unauthorised absence, after 3 days of consecutive

WHAT IS YOUR ATTENDANCE?



absence or after 3 incidents of absence within a 4-week period.

- In line with our policy, parents/carers will receive letters regarding their child's attendance should it fall beneath 96%. Where attendance is below 90%, an Attendance Support meeting may be arranged to help identify any areas that need additional support. At this meeting, personalised and achievable targets for pupils will be developed, based on their individual needs and circumstances.
- Parents/Carers will be informed twice a year about the process for requesting absence during term time and the processes involved should an absence not be considered an exceptional circumstance. (The first of these letters will be sent to all parents/carers on Monday).

Additionally, To ensure clarity and consistency in managing pupil absences, we would like to remind parents and carers of the following important information regarding illness-related absences: In line with NHS guidance and the Statutory Attendance Framework, absences can only be authorised if the school is satisfied that your child is medically unfit to attend. To support this, we kindly ask that you contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence and provide a specific reason, including any symptoms or medical advice received. Where necessary, we may request medical evidence to ensure that we can appropriately support your child's attendance. Please consider the NHS guidance as we will only be authorising illness in line with the NHS advice;

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)

The school level appendix of the Trust attendance policy contains details of relevant staff members who you can contact to discuss any concerns you may have regarding your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us so as we can support where possible.

Once again, thank you for your continued support. We hope that you and your child/children had an enjoyable Summer and we look forward to a new academic year.



Why attendance matters to all staff at Okehampton

By R. Corkell - Assistant Principal

Regular school attendance is one of the strongest predictors of academic attainment. Pupils who attend consistently have greater exposure to teaching, structured learning, and enrichment opportunities, which builds knowledge and skills over time. Conversely, poor attendance disrupts learning, widens gaps in understanding, and reduces the likelihood of achieving expected standards. Research shows that even small drops in attendance can have a significant impact on exam performance, making regular presence in school vital for long-term educational success.

The statistics below are taken from the most recent DfE report on attainment linking to attainment and grade outcomes:

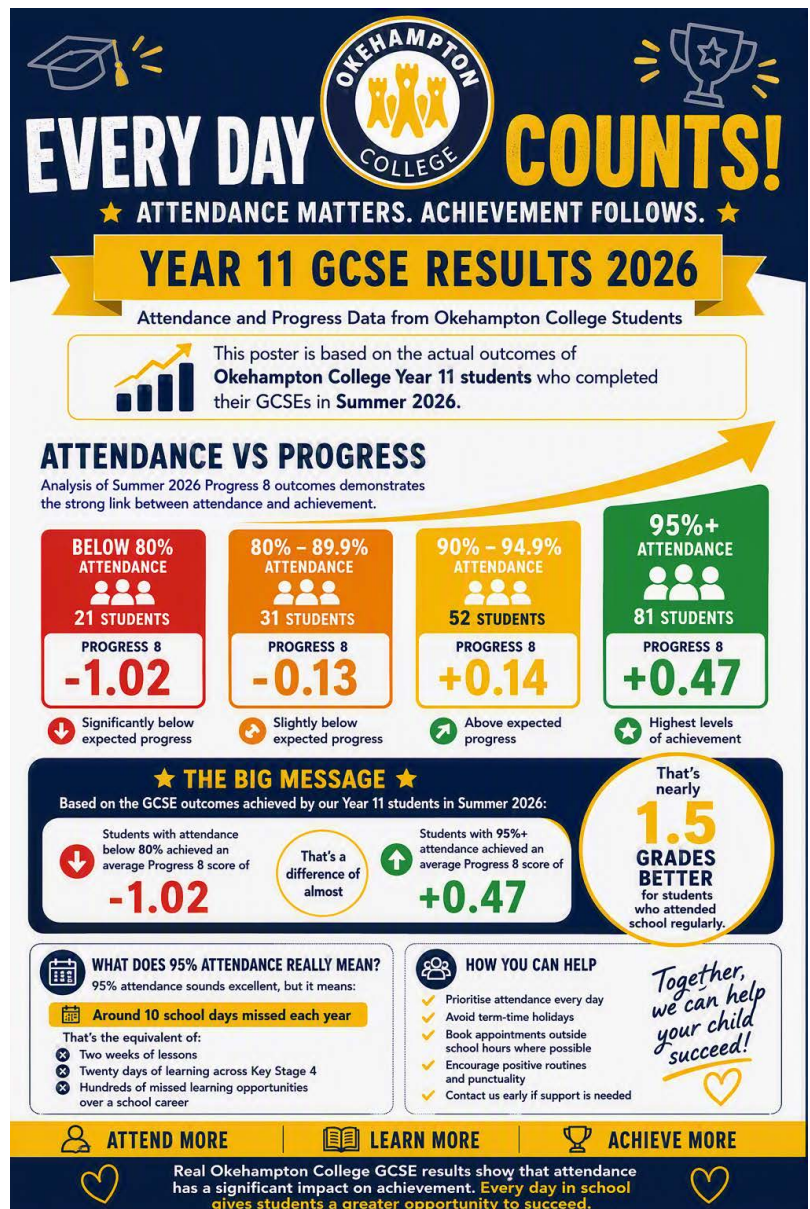
Overall Absence Rates by Attainment Level

- Pupils who did not achieve grades 9–4 in English & Maths had an absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage. (Under 92%)
- Those who achieved a grade 4 had an absence rate of 5.2%.
- Pupils who achieved grades 9–5 had a much lower absence rate of 3.7%. (Above 96%)

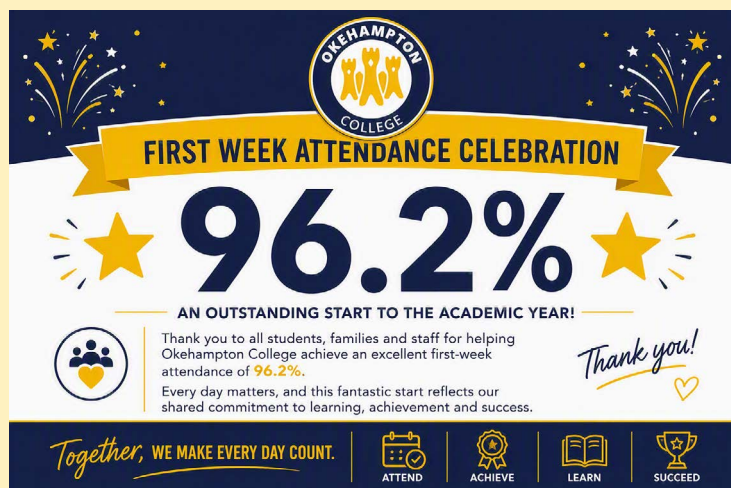
For grades 9–5 in English and Maths:

1. Persistently absent pupils (those under 90% attendance) - only 16.8% achieved the 9-5 grade.
2. Severely absent pupils (those under 50% attendance) only 5.0% achieved grades 9–5.
3. In contrast, 66.4% of those with no absence and 54.4% of those with 0–5% absence achieved grades 9–5.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/link-between-attendance-and-attainment>



Please zoom in to view images in full



Attendance and Achievement Go Hand in Hand at Okehampton College

Our attendance data shows a very clear message: the more students attend school, the better they achieve. Students attending school 95% or more achieved Progress 8 outcomes nearly 1.5 grades better than students with attendance below 80%, demonstrating that every day in school truly matters.

Friday Focus



POP-UP FOOD HUB Okehampton All Welcome



Pop-up WEDNESDAY 9th September 10:00 am
Last Orders WEDNESDAY 2nd September 2026

You will receive an email a week before the event with your time slot for collection. If you don't hear from us, please call 07500113430 or check your junk mail.

Venue: Okehampton Rugby Club, 2 Glendale Road, EX20 1JB

Pre-Order only - Payment **on the day** by card or cash

For £30, which keeps the Charity running, you will receive a trolley load containing:

To book your trolley load:

online:
Okehampton Rotary Club/events
then follow the link

Tea or coffee
Pasta or rice
a selection of tins & cereal
Crisps
pasties or pies
frozen items
fresh fruit & veg
household toiletries
bread/rolls/cake
pet food
other extra items available
all subj. to availability

All welcome.
No referral needed.
**Remember
to bring plenty
of strong bags**



Devon & Cornwall Food Action aims to help everyone by distributing excess produce thereby reducing the impact on landfill



#THRIVEhive

Visit our THRIVEhive
A signposting hub
for advice
& support



www.okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk/Thrivehive/



KEY DATES

- Thursday 24th September - Meet the Tutor Evening 3:30-6:00pm
- Friday 25th September - Sponsored Walk
- Wednesday 30th September - Open Day 4:15-6:30pm (bookings essential)
- Tuesday 6th October - Open Morning 9.15am
- Wednesday 7th October - Open Morning 9.15am
- Thursday 8th October - Open Morning 10.15am
- Monday 12th October - Open Morning 9.15am
- Tuesday 13th October - Open Morning 10.15am
- Friday 23rd October - Non-Pupil Day

HOW TO CONTACT US:

Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

Telephone: (01837) 650910

Email: ash@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk

beech@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk

elm@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk

oak@okehamptoncollege.devon.sch.uk



USEFUL LINKS—CLICK TO VIEW

Term Dates



Enrichment Programme

www.

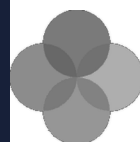


Okehampton College



Attendance

How to use



Arbor