

7th March 2025

Dear Parents/Carers



Community College

Parent and student surveys on school attendance

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

We will be distributing two survey links, one for students and one for parents, aiming to understand what supports and what inhibits schools' attendance soon. This letter provides all the relevant information to help you make an informed decision about your own participation and whether you would like your child to take part or not.

You have **two weeks from receiving this letter to ask any questions or opt out your child from the student survey**. If you do not wish to take part yourself, simply ignore the survey link. If you feel confident about participating after reading this letter, you may proceed with completing the survey when you receive the links. However:

- If you would like **more information, have questions, or concerns, please contact Elpida Achtaridou**, the principal investigator, at eachtaridou@marjon.ac.uk.
- If you **wish to opt your child(ren) out, please inform the school within two weeks of receiving this letter** and we will ensure the survey link is not provided to your child.

What is the survey about?

Plymouth Marjon University, with support from Plymouth City Council, is conducting research to understand what helps or challenges school attendance. They are sending out two surveys: one for parents and one for students. By filling out these surveys, both you and your child can share your thoughts on this important topic. Your feedback will help us improve school attendance strategies for families, students, and schools across Plymouth and the UK.

Key information about the survey:

Consent and GDPR: To take part in the survey, we need your consent, which means you agree to share your responses. Your personal information will be protected under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), meaning it will be kept private and secure. If you do not wish to take part in the survey, simply ignore the survey link when it's sent to you. If you have a child and prefer they do not take part, please contact us within two weeks of receiving this letter.

Anita Frier, Headteacher

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Voluntary Participation: Taking part in the survey is completely voluntary. You can choose not to participate or stop at any time. Your child can do the same with their survey.

Opting Out: If you change your mind after completing the survey, you can contact the research team to have your answers removed until May 1st, 2025. This applies to your child's answers too.

No Consequences: Deciding not to take part or opting out your child will not affect your relationship with the school, teachers, or any other services. You won't be asked any questions about your decision to take part or not take part in the survey. You also won't be asked any questions if you choose to opt your child out of the survey. Such decisions will have no impact on your or your child/ren's relationship with anyone related with the research including teachers, the school, or any other services or with other parents/carers and students. If you prefer that your child does not take part in the research, please contact me within two weeks of receiving this letter.

Confidentiality, anonymity and data use

- Your responses will be **anonymous** and stored securely, following GDPR guidelines.
- Only the research team will have access to your responses. Some data may be reviewed by authorised staff from Plymouth Marjon University.
- The information collected will only be used for the research project and will be deleted 5 years after the project ends.
- Your feedback will inform a report for Plymouth City Council, and the findings may be shared publicly in a way that ensures your privacy.

What if a student or a parent/carer need assistance with the survey or the survey is needed in a different format?

If a parent/carer or a child needs further assistance in completing the survey, or if you need the survey in a different format, please let a teacher in your school know and they will either provide you with the support you need or signpost you to someone who can assist. Alternatively you can contact Isabelle Kolinsky - Isabelle.kolinsky@plymouth.gov.uk , Head of Education and Virtual School at Plymouth City Council or Elpida Acharidou, the research's principal investigator eachtaridou@marjon.ac.uk .

What to do if you or your child feel upset

We've designed the survey to minimise distress and sensitive topics are approached carefully. If any questions make you or your child feel upset, feel free to skip them or stop completing the survey. If you or your child feel upset, it's important to talk to someone you trust. If your child/ren need support, they are advised to speak to a

trusted adult, such as the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, a teacher, parent, or carer.

Further information and contacts

- For more information, questions, or concerns about the research, concerns about the integrity of the research, withdrawing your data as well as if you need the survey in a different format, contact Elpida Acharidou, the research's principal investigator (eachtaridou@marjon.ac.uk)
- For questions about your rights as a research participant, or wish to make a complaint, contact the university's Research Ethics Panel (ethicspanel@marjon.ac.uk)
- For concerns about how your personal data has been used, contact Marjon's Data Protection Officer (dpandfoi@marjon.ac.uk). You can also contact the Information Commissioner's Office via their website at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF or at www.ico.org.uk/concerns.

Yours sincerely



Anita Frier
Headteacher