April 2024

Dear Parents/Guardian,

**This letter has been sent to all parents.**

Excellent school attendance is crucial for students to achieve their full learning potential. With this in mind, we are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

* **Building strong relationships with families**, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working with families to remove these barriers.
* **Promoting excellent attendance** and reducing absence, including persistent absence
* Ensuring every student has access to full-time education
* Acting early to address patterns of absence

If you wish to discuss your child’s attendance, please contact your child’s pastoral manager in the first instance.

**What can you do to help?**

* Ensure your child is well rested during the week with good bedtime routines
* Ensure your child eats a healthy diet and is well hydrated
* Encourage your child to take regular exercise
* Consider carefully if sickness absence is really necessary. We ask you to trust our judgement as carers for your child and rest assured that we will be in contact you should we feel that they are unable to continue in school.
* Avoid booking holidays in term time.

**If your child is too ill to attend school, we ask that you:**

* Ring the school before 8.00am to explain the reason for absence. Your child will be marked with an ‘unauthorised’ absence, and attendance checks will be completed if we do not hear from you with a valid reason. A home visit may also be arranged.
* Work in partnership with your child’s pastoral manager to overcome any barriers to school attendance.
* Avoid making medical appointments during the school day. If this is unavoidable, medical evidence may be requested.
* Ensure your child arrives on time (before 8.25am) every day. Once the registers have been closed and safeguarding checks have been completed, any absences or severe lateness without suitable explanation will be classed as unauthorised.

If we have a genuine reasonable doubt regarding ongoing absence, we may ask for supporting medical evidence.

**Education Penalty Notice Warning for Non-School attendance**

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school. If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12-week period.

* 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance
* 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence
* persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

You could receive a Penalty Notice of £60 which will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution (a separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Wigan Council Attendance Service, in conjunction with schools, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

* Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep
* You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Please be aware that we monitor student attendance closely, as regular absence from school has a negative impact on overall student attainment.

Yours sincerely



Mr P McCaffery

Headteacher