



Welcome



Dear PCS Families.

Welcome to the Attendance Matters newsletter. I hope that you and your families had a restful summer break.

As the Assistant Headteacher responsible for Attendance and Outcomes I need to share with you some key changes that are now in place following the introduction of Government Statutory Guidance issued on the 19th August. A new National Framework for Penalty notices has been introduced for school absence and this includes unauthorised holidays and absences. Further details of this can be found in this newsletter, along with a FAQ.

We want all our students to achieve their best possible outcomes. Both National and our own school research clearly shows that attending school regularly is one of the highest contributing factors towards student success and achievement.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are often wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. At PCS we aim to build strong relationships and work jointly with our families, listening and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.

If you have any concerns regarding school attendance please get in touch with our Attendance Team.

pcs-attendance@swale.at

Kind regards,

Mr Joshua Burns

Morning Registers

Morning registers open at 8.40am and close after 30 minutes at 9.10am in line with Government guidance. If a student arrives at school after the register has closed they will receive a Late U code which is classed as an unauthorised absence mark and will reduce their overall attendance.

We are not able to change codes after the morning register has closed and this can affect attendance. For example: if a student has an early medical appointment and is marked as an M code during the first 30 minutes of registration but arrives back from that appointment after 9.10am the M code must stay in place. Whilst this is an authorised absence it will reduce overall attendance. Please be mindful when making appointments and make them outside of school hours wherever possible.

Term Dates

Term 1

2 September - 25 October 2024

Term 2

4 November - 20 December 2024

Term 3

6 January - 14 February 2025

Term 4

24 February - 4 April 2025

Term 5

22 April - 23 May 2025

Term 6

2 June - 22 July 2025

School Day Timings

8.30am	Arrival
After 08:35 am students will be considered 'late'	
8.40-9.40am	Lesson 1
9.40-10.40am	Lesson 2
10.40-11.00am	Break
11.00-12.00pm	Lesson 3
12.00-12.40pm	Lunch years 7 & 8
12.40-13.40pm	Lesson 4 years 7 & 8
12.00-13.00pm	Lesson 4 years 9, 10 & 11
13.00-13.40pm	Lunch years 9, 10 & 11
13.40-14.40pm	Lesson 5
14.40-15.10pm	Personal Development Intervention (PDI)

How to inform PCS of Your Child's Absence

Please let the Attendance Office know by 8.30am on every day that your child is off school. If your child has been issued with a Doctor's Note detailing the agreed length of absence, you can forward this to the Attendance Office instead of calling each day.

- **Ring the absence line on 01273 575832**
There is an answer phone for out-of-hours messages. You will need to leave the name of the student, their year group and the reason for absence.
- **Email the attendance team: pcs-attendance@swale.at**
- **Repeat for every day of absence**



PENALTY NOTICE FINES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS CHANGING

FIRST OFFENCE

1

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

2

SECOND OFFENCE (WITHIN 3 YEARS)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child to be paid within 28 days. No reduced rate will be offered

The following changes
will come into force for
Penalty Notice Fines
issued after
19th August 2024

3

THIRD OFFENCE AND ANY FURTHER OFFENCES (WITHIN 3 YEARS)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, alternative action will need to be taken.

This can include prosecution with fines of up to £2500 or other attendance legal interventions. Prosecutions can lead to a criminal record.

10 SESSIONS (5 DAYS) OF UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE IN 10-WEEK PERIOD

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered when there has been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.



PENALTY NOTICE FINES FAQ

If I have already booked a holiday for next year, could I receive a penalty fine at the new higher rate?

Yes, if the absence has not been authorised by the Head Teacher of your child's school. Remember, only a Head Teacher can agree whether an absence can be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Who can be issued with a penalty notice?

Each parent can receive a fine for each child who has had unauthorised absence from school.

In education law, anyone who lives with a child and who has day-to-day care of the child is also considered to be a parent whether they are the biological parent or not. For example, this will include step-parents and partners.

Do the new rules only apply to holidays during term time?

No, it applies to all unauthorised absence from school including holidays. Unauthorised absence includes other absence that has not been agreed such as truancy, arriving late after the register has closed at 9.10am and failing to provide reasons for absence.

How do I request for my child to have leave granted during term time?

It will be for your child's Head Teacher to decide as to whether there are exceptional circumstances that will allow them to grant the time off. Do not assume that the absence will be granted until you have received confirmation from the school. Forms are available on the school website or at the school office. Any request must be put in writing at least 14 days before the proposed absence.

Do the 10 sessions of unauthorised absence have to be taken all at the same time before a penalty fine is issued to the parent/carer?

No, a penalty fine can be issued for any combination of absences over a 10-week rolling period. They can be consecutive or non-consecutive.

What happens if I am issued with a penalty fine and I don't pay it?

Unauthorised absence from school is an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996. A penalty fine is an opportunity for you to settle out of court. If you don't take this opportunity, you can be prosecuted for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance.

What should I do if I am worried about my child's attendance?

If you have any concerns regarding school attendance please get in touch with our Attendance Team

pcs-attendance@swale.at