

Dear Parent/Carer

Attendance and Absence Procedures 2017-18

Following new guidance from the local authority in relation to unauthorised absence from school, we felt it would be helpful to write to parents to clarify our attendance and absence procedures at Longsands Academy.

The current government figure for persistent absence is 90% (or below). This means that we are required to alert parents, by standard letter, to our concerns about their child's attendance should it fall below 95% in order to avoid the figure falling to 90%, possibly by providing further support to the student and/or parent. If attendance continues to fall, parents will be sent a second letter which also requires them to come to a meeting in school to discuss the attendance. If this is also ineffective, a final short term attendance target is set followed by referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

Once parents/carers are in receipt of the second letter, we then require written evidence for all absence due to illness. Acceptable forms of evidence are: an appointment card or hospital letter, a copy of a prescription or a copy of the label on any medication from the chemist which indicates the date of prescribing (we are happy to photocopy these on your behalf); we do not require a doctor's letter as this is usually chargeable. Please can I take this opportunity to remind you that we only operate a first aid facility for accidents or injuries that occur during the school day. If a child injures themselves at home it is the parent/carer's responsibility to seek medical attention. Equally parents and carers are required to make a judgement on whether their child is well enough to come to school before the start of the school day, however, medical evidence will be required if your child is within the attendance process as detailed above.

If you need to request a leave of absence from school for your child, please do so at least 2 weeks in advance on the relevant form **and before making any arrangements in relation to the absence**. Academy policy does not allow for the authorisation of holiday requests during term-time, we are only able to authorise any requests for term-time absence in exceptional circumstances, as outlined in government regulations which make it clear that parents do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term-time holiday. Any absence which is not exceptional will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and, as is stated on the Application for Leave of Absence form, may result in involvement of the Education Welfare Officer and possible legal proceedings. In line with new guidance from the local authority, Penalty Notices will be issued for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable.

In relation to any absence request, you should also be aware that:

- there are set times for certain projects such as Controlled Assessments for GCSE subjects. Controlled Assessments have to be completed in school and, therefore teachers may be put to the considerable inconvenience of making alternative arrangements for a student to do the assessments when all the other students have done theirs;
- full attendance during the GCSE years is vital if students are to reach their full potential;
- by missing the last/first week of term, a student will start behind the other students in the year group, as many subject teachers will be outlining the work for the coming year;
- requests may affect events in school such as exam periods, end of unit assessments and careers guidance including work experience.

The regulations surrounding absence from school are very strict; however, we are very keen to support parents where attendance in school is becoming a concern. We do enjoy rewarding individual students and tutor groups for achieving excellent attendance. Please do contact your child's Tutor, relevant Student Support Team or Attendance Officer if there is anything we can do to support you and your child in ensuring they achieve our minimum attendance target of 96%.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Greaney', written in a cursive style.

Mrs C Greaney
Deputy Headteacher