



8th November 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

Attendance and Punctuality

All pupils of statutory school age should attend school every day and parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time. Pupils should only be absent from school if they are ill or have an exceptional reason for absence. Registers are taken every morning and afternoon and are checked regularly each term. Requests for exceptional leave of absence should be made using the form on the [school website](#). Holidays are not a reason for exceptional leave of absence so are not authorised.

Term dates for this year and 2025-2026 are on our [school website](#). Please do check these dates before booking holidays and pass the dates onto grandparents or other family members who might also book holidays for children.

Holiday or illness?

We ask for parents to be transparent about taking holidays during term time. It is important that the registers reflect the true and accurate reason for a pupil absence. It is not appropriate for a pupil to be recorded as being ill when they are actually on holiday. It also puts the children in an incredibly difficult position when they talk about being on holiday when they are back at school. Our regular register checks look for patterns of absence, for example, dates when siblings are both off school at the same time at the end of term with the same illness. We would check these absences with parents, as although illnesses can spread within households, it would be unusual for this to be a frequent pattern.

Persistent Absence

'Persistent absence' is when a pupil's attendance falls below 90%. The school will contact parents throughout the school year when their child's attendance is close to, or falls below 90%, so that support can be offered and improvements made. Where a pupil absence is below 90%, we will ask for medical evidence to be able to authorise absence for illness.

If a pupil's attendance does not improve, a referral to an external support agency (such as the Local Authority Inclusion Officer) could be made and a Fixed Penalty Notice could also be issued (see below).

Punctuality

The school gates open at 8.30am for all pupils and the school day starts at 8.40am. Children need to be in their classrooms by 8.40am – please allow time for the children to walk to their classes. Children who arrive after 8.40am are marked as late. The school will contact parents whose children have been regularly late for school so that improvements can be made.

Start of the day activities (SODA) begin at 8.30am and the children get ready for learning to begin at 8.40am. Arriving late not only means that children miss out on the preparation for the morning, but it can cause anxiety and worry when the rest of the class are all ready settled for the day. We know that sometimes, a situation can occur in the morning that is out of our control, but we work with families so that this does not become a regular pattern for children.

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Tandridge
Learning Trust

Penalty Notices

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 has made changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absences taken after 19th August 2024. The amount payable has increased and there is now a limit on the amount of penalty notices a parent/carer can receive per child within a rolling 3 year period.

- Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.
- Penalty Notices are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided.
- Penalty Notices can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and there are at least 10 unauthorised absences in a 10 school week period (these absences do not have to be consecutive).

The amount payable under a Penalty Notice (PN) is as follows per parent, per child

Absence Category	0 - 21 Days	22 -28 Days	More than 28 Days
First Absence since 19 August 2024	£80	£160	Prosecution
Second Absence (within 3 years of first Penalty Issue date)	£160	£160	Prosecution
Third Absence (within 3 years of first Penalty Issue date)	N/A	N/A	Prosecution

If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution under s444 Education Act 1996.

Being absent from school or arriving late at school affects pupils' social, emotional and academic development so it is vitally important that all children attend school regularly and arrive on time.

Best wishes



Rachel Jewitt
Headteacher