

Dear Parents and Carers,

ATTENDANCE

TSSMAT schools want to ensure that our children are able to take the fullest possible advantage of all that we have to offer. We believe excellent school attendance is paramount to children achieving their full potential and therefore, enhancing lifelong outcomes. Good attendance is central not only to academic attainment but in developing socially, morally, ethically and in enhancing well-being. It is with this in mind, that we set expectations of excellent attendance for all of our children. Evidence shows children with excellent school attendance are more likely to reach higher standards of achievement and be at less risk of exposure to crime and other safeguarding risks.

Children's attendance remains firmly in the spotlight and is an important drive both nationally and for our Trust. This letter, as well as communications from your Executive Headteacher / Headteachers, outlines a change to our attendance policy which is important for you to note and which ensures the schools in our Trust follow the Local Authority's code of conduct in relation to all leave requests during term-time. <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Documents/Code-of-Conduct-From-1.1.2018.pdf>

We have changed our policy to state: **Any** period of unauthorised leave may result in a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. <https://tssmat.staffs.sch.uk/governance/policies>

We have also used the guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) to help our Trust and its schools maintain high levels of school attendance and ensure our policy is full and compliant. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Key points to note from our policy:

- All leave requests must be received in writing at least 14 days before the first day of Absence
- All holiday requests will be unauthorised and any holidays that are subsequently taken will result in a referral to the Local Authority for the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice
- Leave requests that meet the 'exceptional circumstances' criteria will be granted and authorised.

Should the Executive Headteacher/ Headteacher decide not to grant leave of absence and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be unauthorised, which may result in a fixed penalty notice of £60 per parent per child being issued. This fine increases to £120 if not paid within 21 days.

Local Authority Changes to Penalty Notices for Absence from School.

Please note, the money for penalty notices go to the local authority not the school.

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

Any period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. Your head teacher will be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by your head teacher to the local authority.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. This has now changed to 10 marks, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged, where possible, to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

These changes have been implemented to help promote and support good attendance to school.

As a Trust we wish to work closely with our parents and the following links have been provided by the DfE for us to share with families. You may like to read them.

- https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery is my child too ill for school
- <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2022/09/02/back-to-school-week-everything-you-need-to-know-about-school-attendance/> Everything you need to know about school attendance
- <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence> DfE School attendance and Absence

We are sure that this information comes as no surprise due to the media coverage of attendance in schools and it is a higher priority in the OFSTED framework under the behaviour and attitudes area of scrutiny. We strive to achieve or maintain outstanding status for our schools and this is an important aspect that has to be well above national standards to achieve this.

From the Handbook:

289. The judgement focuses on the factors that research and inspection evidence indicate contribute most strongly to pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes, thereby giving them the greatest possible opportunity to achieve positive outcomes. These factors are:

- having a strong focus on attendance and punctuality so that all pupils benefit from the education and experiences the school offers
- having clear and effective behaviour and attendance policies with clearly defined consequences that are applied consistently and fairly by all staff.
- There is demonstrable improvement in the behaviour and attendance of pupils who have particular needs.
- Pupils have high attendance. They come to school on time and are punctual to lessons. When this is not the case, the school takes appropriate, swift and effective action.

Please do take the time to read our Trust attendance policy and the local authority code of conduct which we apply.

Thank you

Kind regards



Charlene Gethin
(CEO)