

Headteacher: Mrs Lucy Miles

September 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

At The Highfield School we work closely with parents to promote and monitor good attendance. The vital importance of good school attendance is supported by the evidence, showing that there is a clear link between attendance and attainment.

As in previous years, the Governors of The Highfield School, with support from the Local Education Authority, will continue with their policy to use a Fixed Penalty Notice system for poor attendance. The details of this system are outlined below. If you would like further information, our attendance protocol is available on request from the school office.

The following information shows how attendance can affect your child's future progression:

97% and above EXCELLENT	95%-96% GOOD	94%-91% UNSATISFACTORY	90% and below SERIOUS CONCERN
Less than 6 days absence per year means 30 days missed over 5 years	10 days absence per year means 50 days missed over 5 years	15 days absence per year means missing 75 days over 5 years	19 days absence per year means missing 5 months over 5 years

The government now defines a student as a persistent absentee (PA) if they have an attendance percentage of 90% and below. This is equal to missing a month of school per year.

Research has shown that as little as 17 missed school days a year can lead to a GCSE grade drop in achievement, so even 95% attendance can have a dramatic effect on a young person's life chances.

We understand that there are sometimes unavoidable reasons for students to be absent. However at The Highfield School we do expect our students to attend regularly and punctually unless there is a very good reason such as serious illness. In this instance parents must let the school know by 8.25am each day, either by leaving a message on 01462 705104 which is our 24 hour answer phone, or by emailing absence@highfield.herts.sch.uk

Parents of pupils who have at least 15 sessions of unauthorised absences in the previous or current term may be issued with a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice requires you to pay a fine of £60 within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within the time limit, the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days. Please note that a session is equal to half a day so one day's absence is equal to two sessions.

Leave of 15 sessions or more for an unauthorised holiday may lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice without any further warning.

A paid Penalty Notice enables you to discharge your potential liability for an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 of failure to secure your child's regular attendance at school. If you do not pay the fine you will be liable for prosecution for this offence.

Although these are regulations we have to follow, we hope that by working together, this action is something we can avoid.

We will aim to write to you as soon as possible after your child's attendance drops below 95% to inform you. Should your child have an attendance rate of 95% and below without supporting medical evidence we will not authorise absence. **The medical evidence can be in the form of an appointment card, confirmation text, appointment letter, photo of a prescription or prescribed medication label.** For ongoing medical conditions, a letter from your doctor and/or consultant will be sufficient to authorise all ongoing absences for that condition. The letter should state that absence from school either for regular appointments or sustained time off will be required.

Thank you for your continued support of the school and ultimately your child's learning.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Lucy Miles
Headteacher