



HIGHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Marsh Lane, Farnworth, Bolton, BL4 0AP

Head Teacher : Mr D Glyn-Jones

Telephone : 01204 571749 / Email : office@highfield.bolton.sch.uk

3rd September 2024

School Attendance

Dear Parents/Carers

During the last academic year, nearly a quarter of all Highfield children (**23.4%**) had an attendance figure which was less than 90% (**more than 19 days off school**). This is classed as persistent absenteeism by the Department for Education (DFE) and very worrying. **Our whole school attendance figure of 93.3% is 1% lower than the national average and places us at 86th out of 97 primary schools in Bolton.** It really is of the utmost important that we work together to reduce persistent absenteeism and improve attendance across school.

Research has shown that children who are regularly absent from school will be at a significant disadvantage, not only academically but socially and emotionally. It is important that your child attends school every day. Please do not consider 'just a day' as OK. **The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.**

What is considered as poor attendance?

Anything below 94% is weak and if attendance dips below 90% we will have serious concerns. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE. **At Highfield we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 95%.** We monitor attendance and will now be providing termly reports on each pupil's attendance.

At the end of each term we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90% and we will arrange to hold a targeted support meeting with the child's parents where appropriate. We then monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and expect to see a pattern of unbroken weeks developing.

Lateness – extremely important!!

Please ensure that your child arrives at school by 8.45am each day so that they are present for registration. Lessons begin shortly after 8.45am and therefore if your child is arriving at school after this time, teaching can be interrupted for other children. All our children would like to be lining up with their classmates in the morning and some children become very upset when they have to walk into their classroom late.

Lateness causes problems over lunch numbers, register marking and missed instructions. Where a genuine reason for lateness exists this will be an authorised absence but where explanations are inadequate or the lateness is after 9.00a.m. then an absence (late) will be recorded.





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Holidays During Term-Time

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time, unless under exceptional circumstances.

Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported as a matter of course to the Local Authority; we are under a duty to do this. Where unauthorised leave is taken, the Governing Body has decided that it will support the imposition of a fixed penalty fine. This can be very expensive. **A holiday request form must be completed under all circumstances and a meeting to discuss the request held with myself or Miss Helme.**

Changes to Education-related Penalty Notices

You may be aware that the Department for Education has recently announced national changes to penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence in term time. These changes came into effect on 19 August 2024.

The changes to be aware of are:

- Penalty notices issued for offences that take place after 19 August 2024 will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.
- The threshold at which a penalty notice **must** be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period (1). This may include absences because of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
- A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).
- Only penalty notices issued for absences taking place after 19 August 2024 will count towards the above thresholds.

Please see examples below for further clarification:

A penalty notice issued for any offence that begins after 19 August will be issued under the new rules. Therefore, it will be (a) charged at £80/£160, (b) count towards the escalation, and (c) be issued in line with the new national threshold of 10 sessions in 10 weeks.

For example, a parent takes a pupil out of school for 5 days in the first week of the new term at the beginning of September 2024, the new rules will be followed.





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Any term time holidays that are taken after the start of the 2024/25 academic year will be treated under the new legislation as the new rules apply to any offences committed from 19 August 2024, regardless of when the holiday is booked.

Yours sincerely,

Mr D Glyn-Jones
Headteacher

