



WEST HILL SCHOOL

Aiming High Since 1927

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13th February 2018

Dear parent/carer,

Last term, I wrote to you to explain the legal framework for issuing Penalty Notices in cases of persistent absence. I explained in that letter that although attendance at West Hill School is consistently above average, the attendance of a small minority of our boys is of significant concern. The vast majority of parents are highly supportive of our efforts to ensure good school attendance. It pays dividends, and is reflected in our impressive Progress 8 score announced last week which puts us 5th in the country for 11-16 boys' schools. Good attendance is paramount to achieving such success and it is for this reason that in the coming months we will be initiating legal proceedings in relation to those pupils who have an unacceptable number of unauthorised absences.

To clarify, an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence is 5 days (10 sessions) or more in a 12 week period (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence), or if your child persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration. In such an event, legal proceedings constitute a Penalty Notice of £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. A Penalty Notice must be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice may result in prosecution (a separate Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

Our data analysis of pupil absence over recent months shows that a large proportion of these absences occur for minor ailments. We encourage both our pupils and staff to maintain good attendance levels and it for this reason that as of next half term (Monday 26th February) we will no longer be authorising absences for minor ailments where we consider boys can attend school. Legitimate student absence for a genuine medical reason will continue to be authorised providing a written note explaining the reason is provided by the relevant parent/carer. However, you may be required to provide medical evidence for long or repeated absences. We also request that wherever possible, routine medical appointments be arranged for school holidays, weekends or after school hours.

All the staff here at West Hill School are fully committed to providing the best possible future for your child. We are understanding and compassionate where there are genuine reasons for pupil absence and are tactful when dealing with sensitive issues. We are confident you will understand our stance on this issue, as it is all part of our aim to provide the best possible education for your son and to Aim High. If you have any concerns regarding your son's attendance at school, please contact us to discuss these further.

Yours sincerely

Mr A. F. Harrison
Headteacher

Please see overleaf for information from Tameside Education Welfare Service



Penalty Notices for Non- school attendance – Information Letter

Dear Parent,

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This means that when a pupil has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in a 12 week period (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if their child persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration, their parents may receive a Penalty Notice of £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution (a separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Tameside Education Welfare Service, in conjunction with schools and Greater Manchester Police, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

Parents may also receive a Penalty Notice without a warning letter for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Their child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- Where the unauthorised absence of a minimum of 10 sessions occurs on consecutive days

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 also makes it an offence if a parent fails to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion. Penalty Notices may be issued for such an offence.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties, please contact your school and ask for help.