

Dear Parent/Guardian

ABSENCE PROCEDURES - EVERY DAY COUNTS

It is important to telephone Mrs Hughes in the Attendance Office (01892 831477) at the start of any absence, so that we are aware and the reason for the absence can be recorded. On return, students should also present to the Attendance Office to inform them that they are back in school. If you are unable to ring, please email Mrs Hughes on hughes@mascalls.kent.sch.uk

We are committed to enabling all our students to achieve their full potential. To do this it is vital that our students and parents/carers involve themselves fully in a commitment to ensure our students attend the school for the maximum amount of available time. Excellent attendance enables students to achieve and take full advantage of the range of opportunities attendance at this school offers.

Irregular attendance places students outside our caring community and undermines the education process and our duty to safeguard them. This situation leads to educational disadvantage and can place our students in a vulnerable position.

We recognise that for the vast majority of our students, good school attendance is a well-established habit for success. However it is important to clarify parental responsibilities with regard to punctuality and attendance:

- Punctuality is valued by all employers and we have high standards in this area. Details of our escalating sanctions for persistent lateness are listed in the full policy.
- Wherever possible, routine medical and dental appointments should be made out of school time.
- Holidays should not be taken in school time. The situation with regard to holidays is sometimes misunderstood. There is no right to take a holiday during term time. The law allows Headteachers to authorise absence for holidays during term time 'only in very exceptional. In practice, this means almost never. Financial convenience is not a special circumstance. If holidays are taken during term time, without authorisation, they are marked 'unauthorised'.
- If attendance falls below 96% (equivalent to 7 days in one school year) then you will be contacted to discuss the reasons and to explore what can be done to help improve attendance.
- It is our policy to authorise no more than 5 days of illness per year depending on circumstances, medical evidence may be required for more than 5 days of illness per year. Failure to produce medical evidence will result in the absence being unauthorised and may lead to a penalty notice or prosecution.

- Penalty notices are issued by Kent County Council if unauthorised absence exceeds 10 sessions, (5days) in any one term. The following are all regarded as reasons for issuing such a notice:
 - Truancy
 - Parental condoned absence
 - Unauthorised holidays
 - Delayed return from holiday
 - Persistent lateness after the register has closed
 - Other unexplained absences

On receipt of a notice, the penalty is currently £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days. This rises to £120 per parent, per child, if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. Failure to pay within 42 days leads to a prosecution and can lead to a prison sentence.

We are committed to rewarding excellent attendance. Students with 100% attendance will be regularly rewarded in Learning Community Assemblies. Parents will also receive regular updates on attendance and punctuality through regular reports.

I am very pleased to report that the attendance of the vast majority of Mascalls students is very good and only a fraction of one percent of all absences are unauthorised. With your support and better awareness of these procedures, I hope we can do even better.

Thank you for working in partnership with us to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality at Mascalls.

Yours sincerely



Mr W Barnett
Principal