



8 July 2024

Dear Parent/Carers

New Government Guidance about School Attendance:

As you are aware there has been a whole school focus this year on continuing to improve attendance, this includes students arriving and being collected late. Thank you all for your support on this. We are pleased to say that there has been a significant improvement with almost all students arriving before the end of registration at 9:30am and being collected between 3:20-3:35pm. This helps us to deliver high quality lessons, attend class/team meetings and deliver staff training.

Our percentage whole school attendance has improved term on term and now stands at 91% for the first half of the summer term.

We are writing to you to inform you of new statutory Department for Education (DfE) government guidance: Working together to improve school attendance. There is now a new National Framework for Penalty Notices that will come into force for unauthorised absences that occur after 19th August 2024. Historically we have never fined parent/carers for unauthorised absence and have taken a very supportive approach in our work with you. However, the guidelines are very clear and it may be a sanction that we have to consider.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. The guidance is very clear and holidays in term time are to be classed as unauthorised absence. Registers will close 30 minutes after registration (9:25am), meaning at Forest Way, if your child arrives after 9:55am they will be marked with an unauthorised absence. For students who find transition difficult, arriving late can cause more anxiety if they do not have time in their class before moving on to their first lesson.

The expectations of the new government guidance are that students must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence to attend medical appointments. If a student has unauthorised absence for 5 or more consecutive days, the Pastoral team will invite parent/carers into school for a meeting to discuss setting a parent/carer contract. When there have been 10 sessions of absence in a 10-week period the same will happen.

We pride ourselves on the relationships and the collaborative working approach that we have with our families and please be assured that we will continue with this. If we have any concerns regarding your child's attendance, a member of the Pastoral team will invite you into school to discuss how we can help you.

Yours faithfully

Gail Seaton
Headteacher

James Shanley
Chair of Trustees