



October 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

Persistent Absence threshold – good attendance and holidays

In September 2015 the Government reduced the threshold for Persistent Absence to 10%, classing any student with attendance below 90% as a persistent absentee. This equates to just over 3 days of absence per half term and applies if the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

If a student were to get a score of 90% on a maths test this would be very good. If, however, a student's attendance is 90% over their five years of compulsory school age, from Year 7 to 11, this equates to missing half a year of school, which clearly is detrimental to any individual, regardless of their academic ability.

Missing school means missing out on learning and this can have an impact on a child's development and attainment. There is a strong statistical link between attendance and attaining good examination results and it is through good attendance that students maximise their full potential, enhancing their life chances for the future. There will be an impact on your child's education and exam results if their attendance is not consistently above 95% throughout their schooling.

This is why we set the minimum target of higher than 96% attendance for every student to achieve. We also appreciate that of course on rare occasions students can be seriously unwell, which is why we celebrate attendance that is higher than 98% as exceptionally good, rather than only 100% as some other schools do. Every day ailments such as a common cold can usually be self-managed by a student in school with suitable over the counter medication. Please, unless your child is seriously unwell, encourage them into school and to be resilient.

However, the law states that children of statutory school age who are on roll at a school or academy must attend regularly and punctually. Roundwood Park operates the Penalty Notice process for 15 or more unauthorised sessions of absence [equivalent to 7.5 days because one session is half a day] in the current or previous term, which follows the law, Local Authority guidance and is policy amongst all Harpenden Trust Schools.

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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 (e.g. two parents with two children could incur a total cost of £480). If parents and carers do not pay the fine they will be liable for prosecution for this offence. Penalty Notices are administered by the Local Authority and they have the responsibility for issuing them to parents and carers.

Requests for absences during term time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. As a parent or carer you are strongly urged to avoid booking holidays during term time. If your child is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and this may lead to a Penalty Notice. By taking family holidays during the designated holiday periods, you will be supporting your child's full school attendance, learning and development. There are 13 weeks of the year to take holidays out of term time.

Thank you for your continued support and I hope by working together we can help your child reach their full potential and make the most of all their opportunities at Roundwood Park.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "ACHenshall". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Alan Henshall
Headteacher