

August 2023



A place to flourish

Dear Parents and Carers

Avoiding Persistent Absence – good attendance, punctuality and holidays

In September 2015 the Government set 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.

It is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The latest available data shows that students with the highest attainment in their GCSE exams, at the end of Year 11, have higher rates of attendance over Years 10 and 11, compared to those with the lowest attainment. Students not achieving a GCSE grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to **5.2% (95% attendance)** among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of students not achieving grade 9 to 4 **was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7% [96+% attendance])**.

Missing school means missing out on learning and this can have an impact on a child's development as well as their social and emotional development. In certain circumstances non-attendance can also raise safeguarding concerns and lead to poor mental health. As demonstrated above, there is a strong statistical link between attendance and attaining good examination results which will potentially open doors. Additionally, 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, demonstrated above, – **as well as most importantly on their general well-being.**

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.

The [NHS advises](#) that it is fine to send children to school with a minor cough or cold provided they don't have a temperature. **Everyday 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, do encourage them into school to ensure that they do not miss out on learning and social opportunities.**

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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 schools.

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.

We will first and foremost **employ a *support first approach*, always seeking to work with you to get your child back to school if they are experiencing attendance challenges**, giving more time when necessary, to resolve complex issues with attending school. **If this is the case with your child please contact your Head of Year, as soon as possible in all instances, (ideally before the start of term this September)**, so that we can understand and address any concerns your child or you as parents and carers have. Working together we would expect that by either arranging a school visit when the rest of the school are not in or by employing other strategies, we can help your child move forward to attending regularly again.

Punctuality

Punctuality is also an important life skill. Please support us by ensuring that your child arrives at school **on time every day**. Students must be in their seats by 8:30am, when the bell rings, but we would ask that they **arrive by 8:20am**, then they will never be late. Late 3 times in a term, and every late after that, is a C3 detention. We will understand when there are exceptional reasons for lateness, e.g. car tyre puncture, but not that the traffic was heavy, when you consider our location, in the London commuter belt and near an international airport. The few students who turn up with this excuse are usually only a minute or two late and so leaving 10 minutes early each day would mean they would always be on time – no matter what might happen.

Requests for absences during term time

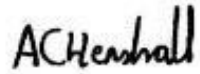
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

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.

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If you wish to discuss anything further regarding attendance then please contact Glen Pettengell, Deputy Headteacher at g.pettengell@roundwoodpark.co.uk or contact reception. 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 "A Henshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'A' and a stylized 'H'.

Alan Henshall
Headteacher