

Presdales School



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Enquiries & comments

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Attendance Policy

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential pre-requisite to effective learning. The school consequently encourages and promotes good attendance. The school monitors students' attendance with the assistance of the Attendance Improvement Officer and encourages good attendance in its publicity, its conversations with students, letters to parents, Parents information evenings, a system of certificates and Reward points for 100% attendance or much improved attendance.

The law requires that parents must ensure that their child regularly attends the school where he or she is registered. If parents do not do this, Hertfordshire County Council may start legal proceedings against them, which includes the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.

Students and parents should therefore aim for 100% attendance and avoid planning holidays or other non-essential activities in school time. Only in exceptional circumstances can a holiday be authorised, and after consultation with the Head Teacher (see below).

Students who find it difficult to attend may be those who:

- are new to the area
- start school midway through a year
- have recently missed a lot of school through illness
- whose siblings were poor attenders
- whose attainment levels in school are poor
- who are teased/bullied
- who are disruptive
- who have previously been excluded
- who have parents in financial difficulties
- have recently separated parents

The school supports students who find it difficult to attend by:

- forging and maintaining strong links with parents
- adapting the curriculum where necessary
- co-operating with and advising home tutors
- offering opportunities for counselling

Regular attendance

It is important that students arrive at school on time. This helps them learn good time-keeping and reduces the chance of classroom disruption.

Registration

- Regulations are in force, which require schools to differentiate in registers between authorised and unauthorised absence and to publish annually in prospectuses and governors' reports their statistics on all absences.
- It will be important that registration is given a high priority and that it takes place promptly at 8.40am and at 1.45pm.

- An email/ phone message must be left for the Pastoral Manager on each day of absence, so the absence can be coded appropriately.
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- If students are going out during the morning/afternoon session, they should take a note/entry in the homework diary signed by her form tutor to Main Reception and then sign out.
- Any students in Years 7 – 13 arriving late (i.e. after 8.40am, irrespective of whether before or after 9.30am) twice in one week or four times in a month should receive a detention.
- Sixth formers should be warned that persistent lateness is unacceptable. The Head of Sixth Form will be advised of any persistent lateness.

Lateness

Students are considered late if they are not present to be registered by the form tutor at 8.40am or by the subject teacher at 1.45pm, even if they are present for subsequent lessons.

If students have been late for a legitimate reasons, their parents/guardians should provide a letter either in advance (in the case of a medical appointment, for example) or afterwards.

Absence notes

- After a period of absence, even if it is only for one session (i.e. a half day), a student must bring a note (addressed to her form tutor) or an entry in her homework diary explaining why the absence occurred. Form tutors read these notes and, if they are satisfied of their authenticity, pass to the Pastoral Manager for entry onto SIMS, the note will then be filed for reference.
- Parents/guardians are asked to advise the school by telephone or email each day if a student is going to be absent.
- Telephone messages are acceptable as an explanation for absence provided the person receiving the call is convinced of the authenticity of the call.
- It is important that a check is made on the authenticity of absence on the first day, if a note/entry in the homework diary or message has not been received.
- Requests for leave of absence for a visit to the doctor/dentist/hospital may be dealt with by form tutors.

Absence from school

Most absences are for good reasons and will generally be authorised by the school, for example:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical or dental appointments (preferably, these should be made after school or during holidays)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement

The following reasons are amongst those for which authorisation is not given:

- Looking after the house
- Shopping during school hours
- Birthdays
- Day trips

Holidays

Students should not be absent from school to go on a family holiday. Only in exceptional circumstances may the head teacher give permission for a student to be absent for this reason. Parents should discuss the circumstances with the head teacher who will determine the number of school days the student can be absent, if leave is granted. There is no right to take a holiday in term time and parents are strongly advised not to book a holiday before discussing their exceptional circumstances with the Head Teacher. If a student is absent from school because of a holiday which has not been agreed, this will be classified as an unauthorised absence and parents may be fined or legal action taken against them.

Re-integrating long-term absentees

The management of the transition back to full-time schooling after long-term absence (for any reason) will play a key role in a student's successful re-integration.

The return of the long-term absentee needs to be carefully planned.

To ease the return of the long-term absentee the school may need to:

- Nominate a key person to co-ordinate, monitor and review the student's return.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of and alerted to the situation.
- Consider the possible need for a phased or gradual return.
- Consider the timetable and determine what is immediately possible and manageable for the student.
- Ensure that any re-introductory programme/timetable is flexible.
- Consider the need to allocate another student as a 'mentor' to the returning student.
- Ensure that the student knows what is expected of them.
- Ensure that the parents understand the re-integration process, gaining their support where possible.