

17th July 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

Working Together to Improve School Attendance – the importance of your child attending every day they can.

As you may be aware, the Department for Education has updated their guidance in relation to school attendance. The published guidance contains clear actions which must be taken by schools, local authorities, governing bodies, and parents. [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

It is nationally recognised that children cannot succeed in school if they do not regularly attend – and where attendance is low, this can directly affect exam results and pathways to further study.

The Department for Education has recently published developed guidance and we are choosing to share this with you as it could affect you directly.

You – as parents/carers:

The guidance states that parents should:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance using the Exceptional Leave of Absence form.
 - Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
 - Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
 - Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention. We actively use, and recommend you also use, the NHS 'is my child too ill for school' guidance: [Is my child too ill for school?](#)

Us – The Portsmouth Academy

As a school, we are required to:

- Expect high standards of attendance.
- Monitor attendance patterns.
- Listen and understand parents and children to identify the barriers to attendance.
- Facilitate support to ensure parents and children can improve attendance.
- Formalise support when voluntary support is not working.
- Enforce attendance through statutory intervention with support from Portsmouth City Council.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with our attendance policy which is currently being updated to reflect the statutory changes. This will be available on return from the summer holidays on the school's website. Here is the link again for the statutory guidance [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

Frequently asked questions

Who can support me if my child doesn't want to come to school? We have dedicated Attendance Improvement Coordinators – they will be your first port of call if you need any attendance support. They will liaise directly with the relevant staff in school (class teacher, head of year, SENCo, Safeguarding team etc) to provide the support you require on an individual basis. Mr L Needham is your Attendance Improvement Coordinator for KS3 (Years 7, 8 and

9) and Mrs C Blake is your Attendance Improvement Coordinator for KS4 (Years 10 and 11). They can be contacted via 03333 602200 or luke.needham@tpa.tsat.uk / c.blake@tpa.tsat.uk

How do I report an absence? We expect all parents to contact us before 8am on every day of absence. You can do this by using our text messaging service on the My Ed app.

At 09:00, all registers are reconciled. Any child who is unaccounted for will be placed on the 'immediate action' list. From here, the following may take place:

- Attendance staff will seek to contact all available numbers on the system via telephone.

It is vital that we know by 8am if your child will not be attending school on each day of absence.

My child is going to be late – what should I do? If your child is likely to be late, it is important that you contact the absence line to notify us of this. School staff will be on the gate from the beginning of the school day to take names if any pupils are late. All late pupils, unless we have heard from a parent, will be in a detention until 9am. Two late marks in one week will result in a 90 minute detention with Senior Leadership Team.

The local authority can issue penalty notices if your child has more than 10 sessions of lateness after the close of registration at 09:00 during a 6 week period.

If your child is late multiple times across the term, they will be placed on late report via their form tutor – and you will be invited in to discuss the concerns

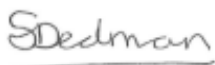
Can I book a holiday in term time? We are unable to authorise any absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. A holiday does not fall under this category. If your child is due to miss school for a period of time, you must complete our exceptional circumstances form which can be obtained by requesting it from the school office and you should detail clearly the exceptional circumstances to which your request is based upon. Please note the local authority may issue penalty notices for all absence which meets their threshold.

Can I book a medical appointment during term time? We would advise against it. We do recognise that some appointments cannot be helped. We expect students to return to school after their appointment with the medical evidence for it. This can be an appointment letter, card or text message.

How do I know if my child has too much time off school? We always ensure we publish our planned systems for monitoring attendance in advance to ensure full transparency with parents. The systems are clearly explained within the Attendance Policy which will be available in September on the website. Here is the link to the current attendance policy - https://theportsmouthacademy.org.uk/site-portsmouth/assets/files/1364/attendance_policy_tsat_2023_2024.pdf

Thank you once again for your continued support. If you have any further questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Needham or Mrs Blake.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Sarah Dedman
Vice Principal for Inclusion