

September 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

Please find detailed below some changes to how we monitor attendance and a reminder of the regulations governing Holidays in Term Time.

Persistent Absence

The Government has reduced the persistent absence threshold from 15% to 10%. In practice this means that any pupil will be persistently absent when they have missed 38 sessions, or 19 days, at any point during the academic year. Which can be as little as 5 or 7 sessions each term.

This shift means that more pupils will be classified as 'Persistently Absent' and their attendance will need to be monitored by the school. We will be continuing to act early to address patterns of absence and ensure interventions are put into place as required to remove any barriers that may prevent a child from attending school. Studies have shown that absence from school has a demonstrable detrimental effect on a child's chances of examination success.

Medical appointments

Medical appointments should, at all possible, be arranged for outside of school hours or in the holidays. Where this is not possible an appointment card or letter should be sent to the attendance officer to enable authorisation. Making medical appointments at the start or the end of the school day will also reduce the amount of time missed.

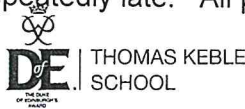
Punctuality and lateness

It is important that students arrive at school on time and ready to learn. We noted that during the last academic year some students are arriving late at school, and to lessons, without a valid reason. As a result some pupils are disrupting the start of lessons.

We will continue to analyse the registers and accrue the time that any student is late; if there is no valid reason in a note from parents which is presented upon signing in, he or she will be placed in detention.

- Up to 20 minutes late per week – Lunchtime detention issued
- Over 20 mins – Afterschool detention issued

We understand that sometimes arriving late is unavoidable. For example, a late bus would not result in any further action being taken. In addition, further sanctions may be put into place for those students who are repeatedly late. All parents should be aware that the



school may consider issuing a Penalty Notice under section 444(1) of the education Act 1996 if a student has 10 late marks within a given time period.

Reporting Absence

If an absence is unplanned (eg illness), you should contact the school office by 9.30am to notify us of the reasons for the absence. You may phone or email the school. If you fail to notify the school, the absence will be unauthorised and will remain so until a reason is provided.

Holidays in term time

The Department for Education (DfE) announced a change to the regulations governing student absence from school with effect from September 2013 which all parents and guardians should be aware of.

The amendment makes it clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. A request for absence can still be made to the Headteacher with the maximum notice, should you believe that the absence fits the criteria of exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will then consider your request and respond in writing with her decision. Absence request forms can still be obtained from the school office or downloaded from the school website.

Before you request such leave we ask you to consider very carefully the implication of such a request. The relationship between high attendance and pupil achievement has never been clearer.

You can find full details of all DfE advice at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools#behaviour-and-attendance>

It should also be noted that further amendments have also been made for regulations for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices to parents who take their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school; an information leaflet which includes the changes and details of Fixed Penalty Notices is attached.

We are proud of our high attendance levels at Thomas Keble School and are keen to ensure all students are making better than expected progress; arriving at school ready to learn is a key factor. Thank you in advance of your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mrs C Rossiter
Assistant Headteacher