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Attendance Matters at Poltair School

At Poltair School, we recognise that excellent attendance is crucially important to our students and we categorise this as achieving an attendance figure of 96% and above. Statistics show that if a child has excellent attendance throughout their school life, on average they will achieve one grade higher in their GCSEs, across all curriculum areas, when compared to a student with an attendance figure of 90% or below. This is the reason why we value attendance so highly - we believe that offering students the opportunities to succeed will enable them to reach their full potential and lead to improved life chances.

You can check your child's attendance by downloading the ClassCharts app and logging into your parent account?

To encourage students to be in school every day, we will be promoting excellent attendance through the following:

- Awarding merits weekly for 100% attendance
- Weekly tutor awards for highest attendance
- Termly attendance raffle prizes
- Termly cinema reward trips
- Recognising those students who are 'Most Improved' each half term

School Absence and The Law

As we approach Christmas and venture further into the Autumn term, the usual coughs, colds and other minor ailments start to appear. I thought it would be useful to inform you of the school's policy when reporting illness, how punctuality can affect attendance and the legal requirements that the

school has to uphold in relation to attendance. Also, I have included some useful NHS guidance for school absence due to illness.

Absence from School

If your child is absent from school, you must contact the school with a reason for the absence. If we do not receive any verbal or written communication from you, then the Attendance and Engagement Officer, or a member of the Pastoral Team, will telephone home. If no response is received, other contacts held for your child will also be contacted. Failure to respond may result in a home visit being conducted. If there is no response to this home visit, your child may be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education. Contact may also be made with Children's Services and/or the Police – in line with safeguarding procedures. **Additionally, please be aware that the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

When advising the school of the reason for your child's absence, please can we ask you to be specific with the reason given. If you report that they are 'unwell', we may call you back to obtain more details.

If your child is absent from school for a prolonged period due to illness, we may request medical evidence to authorise this absence.

Requests for Absence

All requests for absence should be made formally to the Headteacher, at least 15 days in advance, using the CELT Request for Absence Form - this can be found on page 19 of the CELT Attendance Policy and is also available on the school's website. Once completed, this form can either be emailed to attendance@poltair.cornwall.sch.uk or passed directly to our Attendance and Engagement Officer. It is important that you provide the school with full details of the reason for requesting the absence.

I would like to remind you that a planned absence from school will only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances'. This will be at the Headteacher's discretion and only if he is satisfied that **exceptional circumstances** exist.

Please note, Poltair School is making referrals to Cornwall Council for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where holidays are taken within term-time.

The law states:

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a penalty notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A of the said Act. Penalty notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to court. 'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and; any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

Punctuality

To ensure that all students arrive promptly for an 8.30am start, the school gate is closed at 8.28am each morning. All students who arrive between 8.28am and 8.45am, must enter the school via the West Gate - their attendance will be coded as 'L' (Late) and the appropriate sanction will be issued. If a student is significantly late (after 8.45am), they must enter via Reception - their attendance will be coded as 'U' (Unauthorised), which affects attendance negatively, and the appropriate sanction will be issued.

NHS Guidance for Absence Due to Illness

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| Coughs and colds (Including a runny nose) | There is no need for your child to remain at home if they have a minor cough or common cold. However, if they have a fever should they be kept off until their temperature returns to normal. |
| Cold Sores | There is no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore. |
| Head lice and nits | There is no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice or nits. You should treat lice the night before returning to school. |
| Sore throat | You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat, unless it is accompanied by a high fever. |
| Vomiting and diarrhea | If your child has severe vomiting and diarrhea please seek medical advice. If the advice is for your child to remain at home, please provide this evidence on their return. |
| General sickness | Children should attend school once they feel better. If they are unwell in the morning, but better by the afternoon, they can return. If you feel this could be anxiety related, please seek advice from school as we can support with this, rather than keep them at home. |
| Minor headache | A child with a minor headache doesn't need to be kept off school. If the headache is more severe, a GP should be consulted. |
| COVID (It is not recommended that children are tested for COVID 19, unless directed by a health professional) | If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school. Your child should try to avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of COVID 19 with a high temperature and do not feel well enough to do their normal activities. If they have tested positive, try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day the test was taken if you or your child are under 18 years old – children and young people tend to be infectious to other people for less time than adults. |

Finally, if you would like to discuss any issues your child may be experiencing, which are preventing them from attending school, please contact the school as soon as possible and speak to either your child's Head of Year, Tutor, Pastoral Manager, or a member of the Pastoral Team.

Thank you for your continued support.