



Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024

## **Changes to Statutory Guidance for Attendance**

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you may have seen in the media, **from the 19th August 2024**, the Department for Education (DfE) will be changing the statutory guidance for schools in relation to maintaining high levels of attendance. The full statutory guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (published 29th February 2024, applies from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024) can be found here: [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/118117/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_GOV.UK.pdf)

The Government's aim and commitment to improving school attendance following the Covid-19 pandemic has been revised. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend.

It is essential for children to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Please note that children with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

We would like to bring to your attention some of the key changes the DfE have put in place so you are aware of what to expect.

<p><b>Term-time Leave / Unauthorised Holidays</b></p>	<p><b>There is no longer the scope to authorise a term-time holiday in any circumstances.</b> The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance; therefore, term-time holidays cannot be authorised by the school.</p> <p>Parents must inform the school if they choose to take their child on a term-time holiday. This is for safeguarding reasons so we are able to account for all children expected in school. Notification may be in a letter to the Headteacher (via the school office) or an email for the Head teacher's attention to <a href="mailto:office@st-katherines.kent.sch.uk">office@st-katherines.kent.sch.uk</a> - please state the duration of the period in which your child shall be absent so we can mark the attendance register accordingly.</p>
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## Unauthorised Absence and Fixed Penalty Notices

Unauthorised absence can include: unauthorised term-time holidays, persistent lateness (coded U on the attendance certificate) where a child arrives after the register has closed, or, no reason given by parents for absence. **Please report any absence to [absence@st-katherines.kent.sch.uk](mailto:absence@st-katherines.kent.sch.uk)**

Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued by the local authority (KCC) when 10 unauthorised sessions have occurred within 10 school weeks. The school weeks or number sessions do not have to be consecutive. There are 2 sessions in a school day.

As a school, we are under obligation to inform the local authority when this threshold has been met.

**Fixed Penalty Notices are issued by the local authority, not the school, to each parent of each child. The school does not receive the charge – this goes directly to the local authority.**

A maximum of two Penalty Notices per parent, per child can be issued in a 3-year rolling period.

For the first Penalty Notice, the charge is £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days (reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days). For the second Penalty Notice, the charge is a flat rate of £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days.

In both instances, failure to pay the penalty notice in full of the 28-day period may result in a prosecution by the local authority.

In the event of three or more periods of unauthorised absence within a 3-year rolling period, a Penalty Notice will not be issued. Instead, a referral will be made to the Kent Attendance Services Court Team who will consider the case for prosecution.

As you can see, the DfE have made significant changes in how future absence will be handled. We wanted to give our families as much notice as possible of these changes so there is an awareness of the process when booking holidays. We also wanted to be clear on our expectations in relation to the school timings in September:



## Morning Drop Off

<b>8.25am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>School gates will open.</li></ul>
<b>8.30am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Classroom doors will open for all children.</li><li>Early morning learning activities begin.</li></ul>
<b>8.45am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Morning registration.</li><li>Classroom doors and gates will close.</li></ul>
<b>After 8.45am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Late arrivals register through the main reception.</li><li>L code shall be presented on the register to show the child arrived after 8.45am.</li></ul>
<b>Arriving from 9.00am</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Arriving from this point will present as a U code on a child's register, which will be classed as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.</li></ul>

## Afternoon Collection

<b>3.15pm</b>	All gates open.
<b>3.20pm</b>	School finishes.
<b>3.30pm</b>	All gates close in order to keep the site safe and secure for children attending after school club activities.
<b>Late pick up</b>	<p>We fully appreciate that on rare occasions, there may be exceptional circumstances that result in parents/ carers being late to collect their children.</p> <p>However, if there are no exceptional circumstances which have resulted in parents/ carers being late to pick up their children, the following actions will occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If a child is not collected by 3.40pm, <b><u>they will be taken to our after-school provision</u></b>, so that they can be fully supervised.</li><li>Please note that if this happens, <b><u>parents will be charged £12.50</u></b>, as per the usual rate for our after-school club service.</li></ul>

## Walking Home Unaccompanied (Years 5 & 6)

If your child is in Year 5 or 6 and you would like them to walk home unaccompanied, please click on the following link (<https://forms.office.com/e/PV1bKWxmn0>), so that we are aware of which children have permission to do so. Please note that this is in line with our safeguarding procedures and therefore **children will not be permitted to walk home unaccompanied without consent via the link above.**

Please be assured that we are always here to support our families. Our partnership in securing the best outcomes for our children are paramount so please do speak to us if you feel you need support in any way.

Kind regards

Mr Lang  
Headteacher