

September 2024

Dear Parents & Carers

Important: School Attendance

The Government has prioritised attendance as a key area that needs to improve across all schools. As a consequence, the law has changed in regards to parental and school responsibilities.

It is your responsibility to ensure your child attends school every day, except when your child is too ill to attend, has a medical appointment or has been granted authorised leave by school. Examples of reasons why your child may be too ill may include:

- An infectious illness which could spread to other people
- The need for care during school hours that cannot be carried out in school

We are required to share the attached guidance notification from Norfolk County Council – **Norfolk County Council: Penalty Notices regarding school absence – Guidance for parents**

In summary, under the new national framework, all schools and local authorities will be required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days - a session is half a day) for unauthorised reasons.

The new fine will be £160 per child, per parent. For example,

- Example A - a household with a single child of two parents with 5 or more unauthorised absences could receive a fine of £320.
- Example B - A household with two children of two parents where both children have 5 or more unauthorised absences could receive a fine of £640
- If there is a third offence within three years, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in a criminal record and fines up to £2,500.

Marshland School Attendance Policy and Procedures

Our school has made important changes to clarify our attendance policy, practices and procedures in order to support improved attendance from September, in line with the revised guidance. We want to see every child flourish and reach their potential while they are at Marshland.

The key information / changes that parents need to know are:

- If your child is too ill to attend school you must telephone the student absence line on **01945 586314 before 8:15am** to notify the specific reasons why your child is ill.
- Please contact the school **each and every day** your child is absent using this absence line. Please do not email us about your child's absence.



West Walton, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, PE14 7HA
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- On the first day your child returns to school, following their illness absence, you must also provide a letter and/or medical evidence explaining the specific reasons for the absence. This is in addition to the daily telephone contact calls parents are expected to make. Please email the letter and/or medical evidence to: attendance@marshlandhigh.co.uk
- Please refrain from taking family holidays, or any other extended absence during term time.
- Requests for leave of absence must be received ***at least 10 school days*** in advance using the new "Leave of Absence Request Form". This can be obtained from our Attendance Officer.

Please be advised that where you fail to adhere to the key information/changes outlined above, your child's absence will likely be recorded as unauthorised. Where there are concerns regarding your child's attendance, we would like you to engage positively with the school to address these issues which may include attendance meetings and support from school, or other agencies.

Facts about missing school and its impact on your child's future (based on pre-COVID GCSE grades in 2019):

- The higher the percentage of sessions/days missed over KS3 (Years 7, 8 and 9) or KS4 (Years 10 and 11) the lower the level of attainment at the end of that key stage.
- Over 83.7% of children with no missed sessions in Years 10 and 11 achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to only 35.6% of children with an attendance rate of 90% or lower.
- The overall attendance rate for children who:
 - achieved grade 9 to 5 in English and maths was 96.3%
 - achieved grade 4 in English and maths was 95.2%
 - did not achieve a grade 9 to 4 in English and maths was 91.2%

Further Reading:

Alongside the Penalty Notice guide outlined above, please also see attached the information leaflet from Norfolk County Council – "Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance are Changing". It is important that you read both documents. You may also find the following NHS websites useful:

[*Is my child too ill for school?*](#)
[*Minor illness and school attendance*](#)



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