



Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope you are all well.

I'm writing to ask for your help in improving our school's attendance and punctuality. After the national lockdown a few years ago, many students have struggled to attend school regularly. This is true for all schools in Sefton, including ours. However, some schools are making good progress, and we need to improve faster.

Recently, we had an external check on our attendance and punctuality. As the Headteacher, I have to say that the results were not good. We have been told that we have been too lenient, we are over-compliant and this needs to change, for the benefit of our children.

Your child's attendance should be at least 95%, ideally closer to 98%. We have too many students with attendance much lower than this. While we understand that there can be valid reasons for missing school, such as illness or medical appointments, we are seeing too many students missing school for reasons that are not serious, like minor ailments, family celebratory events or a medical appointment but the student stays off for the whole day.

Since I became Headteacher, I have tried to avoid giving penalties for poor attendance, hoping instead to work with families to improve the situation. Unfortunately, I can no longer do this. From now on, I will have to take stricter actions. For example, if you ask for time off during school for holidays, I won't be able to approve it, and you may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). I may also refer more families to the Local Authority Attendance Panels, which can lead to closer monitoring and even more penalties.

Punctuality has improved, but it could still be better. If your child is more than 30 minutes late to school, it counts as a 'U' code, which means the whole session is marked as 'absent.' The government rules require us to issue FPNs if this happens too often. I have tried to avoid this in the past, but I will no longer have that option. We will also continue our same-day detention system for students who are late without a good reason. This is part of our attendance and behaviour policies. Please remember that everyone should be in school for 8.40am with registration starting at 8.50am.

Good attendance and being on time are important for your child's future. We need your support to make sure your child has the best chance to succeed. Please take a look at your child's attendance. If it is above 95%, thank you for your support! If it's below 95% without a valid reason, please work with us to improve it. We might contact you to discuss how we can help. We are only doing this because we want the best for your child as we know you do as well.

If you have any questions, please contact your child's Head of Year. Thank you for your help in making attendance and punctuality priorities for your child's future.

**Mr McGarry
Headteacher**

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