

14th September 2022

Dear Parents / Carers,

Re: Attendance and absence requests

We believe that in order for a pupil to fully benefit from their education, good attendance is crucial. We encourage all pupils to maintain excellent attendance with 96% and above, considered a satisfactory level. Attendance falling below 96% will begin to cause concern in relation to the impact on learning and progress and we may write to you if we have concerns about your child's attendance.

We would also like to take this opportunity remind you that we are only able to authorise exceptional circumstances for absence requests. This is a legal requirement for all schools. We are unable to authorise requests for holidays during term time. If absence is taken without authorisation by the school, this could lead to further action, such as:

- A Penalty Notice (assuming one has not been issued in the past 2 years)
- A summons to the Magistrate Court which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment for up to 3 months.

Schools are required to notify the Local Authority if a pupil has a number of unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absences can be acquired when;

- 1) Leave has been requested, but the circumstances are such that the school is unable to authorise the leave and it is taken anyway.
- 2) Leave is not requested and/or the school has grounds to believe that the child has been taken out of school for an avoidable reason (example – a family holiday). Only the Head teacher can authorise an absence. This year there have been occasions when schools have been notified that the pupil is sick, but the school later discovers and reasonably believes that the reason given for the absence is not genuine.
- 3) A child continually arrives late after the registration period has closed.

Ladysmith Federation will be notifying the Local Authority in all of the circumstances listed above. We would therefore encourage you to communicate closely with us if you do need to apply for absence.

If your child is attending an enrichment day at another educational setting other than a school trip, please complete an absence form; enrichment days will be authorised. It is also helpful if where possible, medical appointments can be made outside normal school hours.

Should a Penalty Notice be issued as a result of unauthorised absence then one notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child involved. Currently, each Penalty Notice is for £120, which is reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days, then court proceedings will be initiated. If a previous Penalty Notice has been issued within the past 2 years then the Local Authority will proceed straight to Court.

We understand the disappointment that the refusal of a leave request may cause and we apologise, but as you can appreciate this policy represents our responsibility and commitment towards providing your child's education and supporting their future life opportunities. We hope you will support us by ensuring that your son/daughter obtains the maximum benefit from their time at school by attending punctually.

Thank you for your anticipated support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Mark Wilkinson