Higham Lane North Academy

ATTENDANCE NEWSLETTER

Working in Partnership

Thank you for working in partnership with us this half term to ensure excellent attendance for our pupils. The purpose of this newsletter is to remind families of our expectations for school attendance, to share important information about absences, and to help you make informed decisions about when your child should attend school.

We aim for every pupil to achieve 100% attendance, but we understand that there may be occasions when absence is unavoidable. Our school target is 97% attendance for all pupils. We are committed to supporting all of our North Stars and their families as their safety and wellbeing remain our biggest priorities. If your child is struggling with their attendance, please contact Mr Rowe Pastoral Manager or, Miss Charles Deputy Headteacher, via email at hello@hlna.co.uk or call 024 75106910 to discuss this matter further.

Celebrating attendance achievements

At Higham Lane North Academy, we are committed to recognising and celebrating our students' achievements.

This week and next week, students are taking part in our 10-Day Attendance Challenge. Any student who attends every day between 2nd and 13th November will be entered into a prize draw with a range of exciting rewards on offer, including vouchers, sweet treats, and our ever-popular early lunch and sit next to a friend passes.

While we celebrate and encourage 100% attendance, we also recognise that, for some students, particularly those with significant medical conditions or other exceptional circumstances, achieving full attendance may not always be possible. Attendance is not simply about perfection; it is about commitment, resilience and making the most of every opportunity to be in school.

That is why we also celebrate students through initiatives such as our 98% Club and 1% Improvement Rewards, recognising those who maintain strong attendance or make meaningful improvements over time.







What does my child's attendance percentage mean?



Our Attendance Ladder shows just how quickly missed days add up. With five hours of lessons each day, even a small amount of absence can mean missing a significant amount of learning. For example, 4 days of absence equates to 20 hours of lost learning, while 20 days means missing an incredible 100 hours!

IF YOUR CHILD FEELS UNWELL AT SCHOOL



Please rest assured that if your child feels unwell during the school day, we will take care of them. In most cases, unless it is an emergency, pupils are encouraged to remain in lessons where their class teacher will monitor and support them. The majority of pupils are able to stay in lessons until break or lunchtime, when they can visit the school office for further assistance. We can also provide them with a quiet space to work if they need it and time with our pastoral staff.

If your child is feeling unwell, you may send them to school with throat lozenges or hand in paracetamol, Calpol, or other medication they may require, and we will ensure it is administered safely. In many cases, pupils start to feel better once they have had a drink, something to eat, and appropriate care.

Please note that pupils are not permitted to contact parents or carers directly using their own phones. If your child becomes too unwell to remain in school, a member of staff will contact you immediately.

INFORMATION FROM WARWICKSHIRE ATTENDANCE SERVICE
LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Supreme Court has clarified the law on unauthorised leave, including holidays, during term time (Platt v Isle of Wright 2017). The Supreme Court has made clear that attending school 'regularly' means that the children must attend school on every day that they are required to do so. As such, the parents of any child who is absent from school without authorisation for any length of time are likely to be considered as committing an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996.

The law states a leave of absence may only be granted by a school if an application is made in advance and if it considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.

When making an application for Leave of Absence parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify parents of their decision. The school may also request further information on the application and supporting documentation where appropriate.

It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is the parents' responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.

The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent ie the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child is expected to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Where a leave of absence is requested, but additional days taken either prior to or after the request may be considered as part of the leave of absence.

Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service, part of Warwickshire County Council. Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and in the first instance, as an alternative to prosecution proceedings.

The law relating to Penalty Notices changed with effect from 19 August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence taken from September 2024 will be issued in accordance with the updated legislation.

- Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices – 4 in total).
- First Leave of Absence offence: The Penalty Notice amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
- Second Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): The amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.
- Payment plans will not be offered and/or payments received outside of the 28 day period will not be accepted. Where a penalty notice expires unpaid the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider criminal prosecution.
- Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): A penalty notices will be not be issued and the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Your child's progress academically, as well as socially is our shared priority.