



Whitstable & Seasalter Endowed Church of England (Aided) Junior School

High Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1AY

Tel: 01227 273630

Headteacher: Ellen Taylor ELM MSc | BA Ed (Hons)

headteacher@whitstable-endowed.kent.sch.uk

20 June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

We are writing to let you know about important changes to school attendance regulations that came into effect at the start of this academic year. These changes are part of the Department for Education's (DfE) updated guidance, *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*. The aim is to ensure all children receive the best possible education by promoting regular school attendance.

Key Changes to Be Aware Of

1. Daily Attendance Data Sharing

All state schools are now required to share daily attendance data with the DfE and local authorities. This helps to identify and support students at risk of persistent absence.

2. Support Before Legal Action

Schools must provide support to families before considering legal action for poor attendance. This includes identifying barriers to attendance and offering help through meetings and external support services. If you are concerned about your child's attendance, please do speak to Miss Parker, our Family Liaison Officer, who can help and provide appropriate support as necessary.

3. Changes to Absence Codes

New attendance codes have been introduced. For example, the code for authorised term-time leave (holiday) has been removed. Headteachers can no longer authorise term-time leave unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absences include:

- where there is no reasonable circumstance for the absence taking place;
- arriving late after the register is closed; or
- a combination of these with holidays taken during term time.

4. Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absences

If your child has 5 days (10 sessions as each day is recorded as two sessions; morning and afternoon) of unauthorised absences within a 10-week period, you may receive a penalty notice. The fine is £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, and £160 if paid within 28 days. If a second penalty notice is issued within three years, the fine increases to £160, with no reduction for early payment. A third offence will result in a referral to Kent PRU and Attendance Service Courts Team, who will consider the case for prosecution. Parents with parental responsibility and adults residing with the child, including for example, stepparents, may also be fined and a penalty notice will be issued for every child who is absent.





5. Electronic Registers and Record Keeping

Schools are now required to maintain detailed electronic registers, including reasons for absences, and to store these records for six years.

How These Changes Affect You

- **Regular Attendance is Crucial:** Ensuring your child attends school regularly is vital for their education and well-being. This also includes punctuality and the importance of ensuring that your child arrives at school on time every morning, ready for the start of the school day.
- **Communication is Key:** If your child is unable to attend school or is going to arrive after registration at 8:50AM, please inform us promptly with the reason for the absence or lateness.
- **Exceptional Circumstances:** Requests for term-time leave will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Please refer to our school's [Attendance Policy](#) for more information.
- **Support Available:** If your child is facing challenges that affect their attendance, please contact us. We are here to support you and your child.

We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring your child's regular attendance at school. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

Ellen Taylor
Headteacher

