

16 September 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

Attendance and Punctuality at SJP

Parents are responsible for ensuring full time, regular and punctual attendance of their child, who is of compulsory school age, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have at school or otherwise. Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. This is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind.

At SJP we wish for all our pupils to 'be more' and it is clear that pupils learn best and receive the most from College when they are actually present. This issue is highlighted in the Home/School Agreement which all parents are asked to sign at the beginning of each year and also within other regular communications between home and school. The importance of attendance is explained during the interviews of all pupils who wish to come to SJP.

Whilst it is inevitable that students will be ill from time to time, repeated time off can have a significant and negative impact on students' learning and progress. Parents must contact the school each day to inform us of the reasons for your son/daughters absence. I am writing to remind you about the strategies that were introduced previously to manage students' absence and punctuality.

Medical evidence - We will request medical evidence from you if your child is absent for a period of time, and when their attendance falls lower than 90%. The DfE name this as 'persistent absence'. Medical evidence may take the form of a copy of a prescription, a doctor's letter, or similar.

Back to school - Once a pupil is back at school, we will conduct a short meeting with them and one of the pastoral team (either HOL or LC). This will enable us to look at any work they have missed so that class teachers can ensure they can catch up. We know that this is a worry for many pupils when they return (even after a short absence); hopefully this will ensure a smooth transition back into lessons.

Medical appointments – We expect pupils not to have routine medical appointments during school hours. While we recognise that it can be very difficult to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours, I would again ask you to always attempt to do so. We would expect students to return to school after the appointment, and to attend before it, unless there is good reason why this cannot be so.

Holidays - Again, I draw your attention to the fact that Holidays in term are subject to them being noted as Exceptional circumstances – 'rare/significant/unavoidable/short/cannot be scheduled at another time'. This means, of course, that family weddings, pre-booked holidays and holidays to coincide with annual parental leave will not automatically be authorised. The form for holiday requests can be found on the website (it will only be accepted in this format, although you can add additional information separately if you wish) and should be handed in to the main office **at least one month** prior to the date requested.

Please be aware that parents of pupils who take unauthorised holidays, or those whom attendance falls below the required 90% are at risk of receiving an Education Penalty Notice. Further information can be found on the Wirral Council website, the College Parental Handbook and the attendance policy on the College website:

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/education-social-welfare-service#wgSM-0>
<https://www.stjohnplessington.com/>

Punctuality

In order to maximise learning, it is important that all pupils arrive to lessons on time. However, some pupils are unacceptably late and arrive after the lesson has begun, disrupting the lesson and the learning of pupils who were on time. We expect no child to be late but if a child is late, he/she will receive a detention that night with a Senior Leader in line with DfE guidance. The detention will be for 30 minutes. However, if a pupil is late for more than one lesson and/or Academic Review, the detention will be repeated the following day. Our pupils have been reminded of this in assemblies.

Can we ask that you reinforce this expectation with your child as failure to arrive to lessons on time could result in a detention after school. We will, as always, endeavour to let you know if this applies to your child so that you know to expect them home later than normal from school.

A child who is absent one day of school per week misses an equivalent of two years of their school life; 90% of young people with absence rates **below 85%** fail to achieve five or more good grades at GCSE, and around one third of this cohort achieve no GCSEs at all.

As always, we seek your support to ensure that students attend school when they are well, and return to school as soon as possible after an illness with a note in their planner to explain the absence.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mr S J Rylance". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'M'.

Mr S J Rylance
Head Teacher