

13th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

We are really pleased with the way the new term has started. The pupils and students have arrived with positive attitudes, look incredibly smart and are focused on their learning. We could not ask for anymore and we want to thank you for your support too. We hope your child has enjoyed the first two weeks.

The new government is starting to announce policies now, including in education. You may have seen changes to the way OFSTED inspects and that the curriculum is going to be reviewed over the next year or so. We have been told that will lead to 'evolution not revolution' and we are confident our broad curriculum will continue to meet our learners' needs in the future.

The government also announced changes to how pupil attendance is managed. There is an increasing awareness of just how important regular attendance is for a child's education and the impact that absence can have on the child themselves and the class around them. The government have therefore introduced new regulations, which are now in force.

The sections below are taken from the new government guidance. We always prefer to work positively and constructively with you. If there are things we can do to help your child attend better, please let us know. Please know, also, that we are here to help. Do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you need some support. If in doubt, you can get in touch by calling school on 01484 463366, email your child's Head of Year or contact the Attendance Team: royds.attendance@sharemat.co.uk.

The full government guidance can be found here: [Why is school attendance important and what support is available? – The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

These extracts give you a sense of the messages:

Why is school attendance important?

Being in school is important to your child's academic achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. There is evidence to suggest that regular school attendance is a key mechanism to support children and young people's educational, economic and social outcomes. Schools can facilitate positive peer relationships, which contributes to better mental health and wellbeing.

Attendance at school is crucial to prepare young people for successful transition to adulthood, and to support their longer term economic and social participation in society. There is also [evidence](#) that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A level results.

Our research found that pupils who performed better both at the end of primary and [secondary school](#) missed fewer days than those who didn't perform as well. For example, data from 2019 shows that 84% of Key Stage 2 pupils who had 100% attendance achieved the expected standard, compared to 40% of pupils who were persistently absent across the key stage.



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Is my child too sick to go to school?

It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses, including general cold symptoms like a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. Children should stay at home if they have a high temperature (38C or above).

Schools have received a [letter from the Chief Medical Officer](#) which explains how to tell whether a pupil is well enough to be in school.

Further information about whether your child is too ill for school, including information on other illnesses like chickenpox, headlice, and a sore throat, is available on the NHS website [here](#).

My child is anxious about going to school, should I send them in?

Children can sometimes feel a little bit worried about going to school. Mostly, this is a very normal emotion. It is important to recognise that going in to school can help children to feel less worried than letting them stay at home.

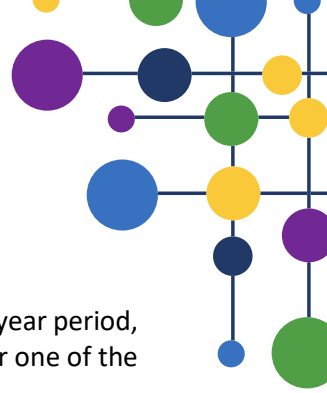
If your child is anxious over several weeks, talk to their school about how they can support you. We have put together some useful [links and sources](#) of mental health support which you may find helpful.

The new regulations we are working to, including stricter approaches to unauthorised absences and fixed penalties is as follows:

September 2024 Attendance Regulations

As part of the government's ongoing commitment to raising educational standards, new attendance regulations have come into effect from September 2024 for all schools in England. Key changes and expectations include:

1. **Clear Attendance Thresholds:** Schools are now required to monitor attendance more closely. The threshold at which a penalty notice must be considered is set at 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school week period. This may include absences because of arriving late after the register closes. The 10 school weeks may span different terms or school years.
2. **Early Intervention:** Schools are expected to engage with families at an earlier stage if attendance falls below expected levels. This is to offer support, identify any barriers to attendance, and work together to find solutions before attendance issues escalate.
3. **Fixed Penalty Notices:** In line with national regulations, local authorities may issue fixed penalty notices to parents or carers if their child's attendance does not improve following intervention. Penalty notices issued will be charged at a new rate of £160 per parent per child. This can be paid at £80 if paid within 21 days. Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be issued at the rate of £160 to be paid within 28 days with no option for a discounted rate.



A maximum of two penalty notices may be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the third offence another course of action will need to be considered (such as prosecution or one of the other attendance legal interventions).

4. Leave of Absence: Schools are only permitted to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays during term time are not considered exceptional.

Working Together for Success

The vast majority of our pupils have brilliant attendance. Our attendance rates are typically about 2% above the national average but this is still well below the rates we were used to before the pandemic. We want to get back to those levels because we know it gives our pupils and students the best chance of enjoying school and achieving well. We know you will support that aim.

We understand that, at times, unforeseen circumstances may arise that affect your child's ability to attend school. Our priority is to work with you to overcome any barriers and ensure that your child can attend regularly. If you have any concerns or need support with your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact us. We are here to help.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in ensuring that your child has the best possible chance of success. Together, we can help them thrive both academically and personally.

Yours sincerely,

John McNally
CEO Share Multi Academy Trust

Jenny Carr
Executive Headteacher Royds Hall School