

8 November 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

### **RE: School Absence – Listen, Support but Do Not Tolerate**

At Bexhill Academy, we firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential for the educational progress and overall wellbeing of our pupils. We hope that this letter helps you to keep in mind the key aspects of our attendance policy.

- Why regular attendance matters
- Consistent school attendance allows your child to:
- Fully engage in learning and make academic progress
- Develop critical social skills by interacting with their friends and teachers
- Grow in confidence in a supportive and nurturing school environment
- Build a sense of routine and responsibility, essential for future success

#### **Attendance support**

We understand that some pupils may face challenges that impact their attendance. Our school's attendance team is here to provide support and guidance to pupils and families in such situations. If you encounter any difficulties related to attendance, please do reach out to your child's Form Tutor in the first instance.

#### **Acceptable reasons for absence**

We recognise that there are circumstances where a pupil's absence can't be avoided.

Acceptable reasons for being absent from school include:

**Illness:** when your child is unwell, either physically or mentally, and unable to attend school

**Medical appointments:** if your child has a medical appointment that cannot be scheduled outside school hours, please notify us in advance and provide relevant documentation (e.g. an appointment card)

**Religious observance:** we respect the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of our pupils. If your child needs to be absent for religious observance, please submit a request and the Head Teacher will review and approve the absence

**Exceptional circumstances:** in exceptional situations, such as family emergencies or unforeseen events, please contact the school immediately to discuss the absence

#### **How to report unplanned absences**

In the event of an unplanned absence, we request you follow these steps:

**Contact the school:** on the day of the absence, please call the school office before 8:30am to inform us about your child's absence

**Provide a reason for absence:** please provide a brief explanation for the absence, such as illness or family emergency, to help us maintain accurate records

**Send a written note upon return:** when your child is ready to return to school after an absence, please send a written note explaining the reason for the absence. This note should be given to your child's Form Tutor

#### **Term-time holidays**

Term-time holidays are generally not permitted during the school year. Absences due to term-time holidays are disruptive to learning and lead to missed opportunities in the classroom.

However, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances that require a term-time holiday. In such rare cases, please submit a formal request to the Head Teacher well in advance. The Head Teacher will carefully

consider each request and, if deemed appropriate and in the best interest of the child, may grant permission for the term-time holiday.

We emphasise that such instances will only be considered on a discretionary basis, and the decision will be made with the pupil's educational welfare as the utmost priority. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding regarding our approach to term-time holidays.

### **Fines for unauthorised absence**

The Head Teacher may issue a fine (known as a fixed-penalty notice) for unauthorised absence. If issued with one, you'll need to pay this directly to the local authority – £60 within 21 days, or £120 within 28 days.

The decision whether to issue a fine may take into account factors such as the number of unauthorised within a rolling academic year and one-off instances of irregular attendance.

### **Rewards for good attendance**

We value and recognise good attendance at Bexhill Academy. Pupils who maintain excellent attendance records throughout the academic year are eligible for special rewards and recognition.

Weekly rewards such as sweet treats and certificates will be given out where targets are met. Each term we try to hold exciting events or parties for the students which great attendance makes them eligible for. Term two offers students the chance to attend a Christmas party if they have the percentage required!

Let's work together to celebrate and encourage regular attendance.

### **My question hasn't been answered here**

Please get in touch with Mr. J Bayliss on [joseph.bayliss@bexhillacademy.org](mailto:joseph.bayliss@bexhillacademy.org) with any further questions, and we'll be happy to discuss them with you.

Thank you for your cooperation in making sure your child receives the best possible educational experience.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs T Hillman  
Deputy Headteacher