

Sir Roger Manwood's School Absence Procedures

These procedures apply equally to students in Years 7 to 11 as they do to those in the Sixth Form.

Unplanned Absences

On the rare occasions that a child is unwell and unable to attend, it is important parents contact the School before 9.00am by telephone (01304 610202) or email (attendance@srms.kent.sch.uk) **on each day of the absence** (unless a student has been signed off by a medical professional and evidence of that has been passed to the school).

If requested to leave a voice message, please state clearly:

- Your child's name and form
- Date of the absence
- Reason for the absence

When your child returns to school please ensure that they bring the information mentioned above in writing, to give to their form tutor. No absence can be authorised without a hard copy letter written by a parent/ carer.

Planned Absences

If it is unavoidable and your child needs to attend an appointment during school hours then parents should provide their son/daughter with a letter containing all the relevant information. This letter should be shown to their form tutor during registration and the Office before they sign out. It is essential to have a written record to be confident that we know where our students are at any time during the school day.

For planned absence other than medical appointments, requests should be made on the School's absence request form (available from <http://www.manwoods.co.uk/pages/student-absences> and the School Office). The request should be submitted to a child's Form Tutor a minimum of 1 week prior to the date of the absence.

Please note that other than for illness, absence cannot be approved retrospectively.

In line with Department for Education (DfE) Regulations schools may only authorise a student's absence if they are satisfied that **exceptional** circumstances exist. Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- Music/dance exams
- Driving tests (but not driving lessons)
- Orthodontist and hospital appointments
- Emergency dental and medical appointments
- Exceptional opportunities e.g. to represent the district/county/country at sport; to attend a career related course or, for Sixth Form only, work experience that is relevant to the student's future degree or career and it cannot be organised for during holiday time

Consequences Of Poor Attendance

- 95 - 100% attendance – the tutor will talk to the pupil and notify their Head of Year, if necessary
- 90 - 95% attendance – the Head of Year will talk to the pupil and place them on report if necessary

- Below 90% - the Head of Year will meet with the pupil and parents to discuss the situation, unless there is a good, known, *authorised* reason for their absence. If there is no improvement then the school may refer the child to the KCC Attendance Service.

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence in a 50 day period, KCC's Attendance Service will consider the following:

a) Referral to the Education Welfare Officer

This may include:

- An Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

b) Issuing a Penalty Notice

In cases of unauthorised absence a Penalty Notice may be issued. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued include:

- Overt truancy
- Parentally condoned absences
- Unauthorised leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term time
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school
- When an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of exclusion

There is no statutory right of appeal against the decision to issue a Penalty Notice and the sole authority to authorise absences lies with the Headteacher and their decision is final.

A Penalty Notice, carries with it a fine of £120 per parent per child, which must be paid within 28 days of receipt of the Notice, which is reduced to £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice would be issued to both parents. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

When a referral to the Attendance Service is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of meetings will be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service's Code of Conduct.

The Attendance Service will issue a warning letter to the parents setting out 15 school days during which no issues should arise that lead to an unauthorised absence being recorded. If an unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued.

Sixth Form Specific Detail

Sixth form students:

- must register at 8.40am, and remain in school from morning registration until at least the beginning of lunch time
- may leave school to go home from the beginning of the lunch break onwards provided they have completed all their lessons for the day *and have no school duties to perform during the lunch time or after school*
- must not leave the site before the start of the lunch break, regardless of whether or not they have finished their timetabled lessons, other than if this has been agreed with the sixth form pastoral team in advance e.g. for taking part in voluntary work
- must sign out whenever they leave the school site and sign back in again if they return before the end of the school day

Being able to leave school at the beginning of the lunch period if a sixth former has a study period for their last period is a privilege and any sixth former found not to be behaving or working as they ought to be (see Sixth Form Code of Conduct) will have that privilege withdrawn and have to sign in with the sixth form pastoral staff at the normal end of the school day.

Sanctions can be applied by the Sixth Form pastoral team to any sixth form student found to have left the school site at a time outside those specified above without a valid reason. These can include a loss of privileges or an after school detention.