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Dear Parents/Carers

Please find attached the first of our new termly attendance newsletters. Each term we will focus on key areas and we hope you will find the information we share useful.

We would like to draw your attention in particular, to the "Reporting an absence", section of the newsletter as we have recently reviewed our procedures and our staff will be asking more detailed questions when your child is absent. The last 15 months of lockdowns have highlighted the need for schools to be more robust when dealing with student absence.

Absence from school is a safeguarding issue for some young people and we have a duty of care to ensure all of our students are safe during school hours.

Working in partnership with our families is vital and good school attendance and punctuality optimises your child's opportunities to fulfill their potential, academically, spiritually, socially and emotionally during their time at Savio Salesian College.

If you would like to speak to us about your child's attendance, please get in touch and we will be happy to meet with you.

Yours faithfully

Mrs C Murphy-Worrell
Assistant Head

Mrs L Howe
Pastoral Care & Standards Leader

Mrs S Willcox
Attendance Officer

Attendance Matters

Savio Salesian College

Summer 2021

Edition 1

Importance of good attendance

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Students need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Savio Salesian College fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure students are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Lost learning

The 1996 Education Act, (section 444) states that parents (including non-related adult carers in the child's household) have a legal responsibility to ensure that those of compulsory school age are educated, either by 'regular' attendance at school or 'otherwise'

There are 190 days in a school year, which leaves 175 days to spend on family time, shopping, appointments and other things!

Yearly attendance	Equivalent number of days missed	Equivalent number of weeks missed	Equivalent number of lessons missed
95%	9	2	50
90%	19	4	100
85%	29	6	150
80%	38	8	200

Reporting an absence

Your child should be in school by 8.25am. You must contact us by 8.30am if your child is going to be absent.

As non attendance at school is a safeguarding matter, when you call we will ask the following questions;

- The reason for your child's absence. (the more detail you provide the better we can support you & your child.)
- Does your child have adequate supervision for their age/development throughout the day? (For older children with minor ailments this may be regular check in's through the day rather than an adult being with them.)
- Is the absence something we can support you with? E.g. could they manage a shorter day or need support from our Pastoral Team?
- When will your child return to school? (We will contact you again if your child does not return when we expected.)

Unexplained absences

All absent students are a cause for concern until we have established the reason for their absence. If we do not hear from you we will take all steps necessary to contact you and establish why your child is not in school. This includes;

- Telephone call, text message and email to priority contact
- Follow up calls to all emergency contacts you have provided to us
- Home visit from school staff or the LA Early Help Attendance team
- In the event we cannot locate your child if we have concerns for their wellbeing we may refer the matter to Sefton Children's Services or Merseyside Police

If your child has 10 or more sessions (5 days) in one term or 18 or more sessions (9 days) over two terms we will request medical evidence for future absence. We may refer you to the LA for an attendance panel meeting or a 15 day period of monitoring. If attendance does not improve over this period, under section 444, a Penalty Charge Notice will be issued for £60 to parents. This will be issued to both parents even if one of the parents does not live with the student. Each parent will have 21 days to make payment. This will rise to £120 if the initial fine is paid between 22 and 28 days

Examples of unauthorised absence

Not attending school to go shopping or for a day trip.

Not attending school on their birthday or the birthday of a family member

Not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member.

Not attending school due to the fact the family returned late in the previous evening from a family holiday.

Not attending school as they are looking after younger siblings.

Attending a medical appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons. Illness when medical evidence is required but not provided to us.

Is my child 'too ill' for school? There are clear government guidelines for schools that say when children should be kept off school. The below guidance taken from the NHS website and includes information on common childhood illnesses where school is missed when it needn't be. It is vital to follow this, as school will unauthorise your child's absence if they feel they are well enough to be in school (this could lead to consequences for parents/carers, which we would like to avoid!):

Coughs and colds

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or cold. But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes. Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly. If this is a new persistent cough or your child has a fever and/or loss of sense of smell/taste you must follow COVID-19 guidelines and inform us of the situation. If your child tests positive for COVID-19 we will need to inform other families in their bubble so it is important we know as soon as possible. Your child's attendance will

not be affected by COVID-19 related absences.

Sore throat

You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat. But if they also have a fever, they should stay at home until it goes away.

Menstrual Cramps

School should not be missed due to 'the time of the month'. It's important for your child to have pads or tampons with them at all times and ensure that they are comfortable making regular trips to the bathroom. Consider a suitable 'hiding place' for products, whether it be a spare 'pencil case' or a side pocket of their bag as some children can feel nervous about sanitary products being discovered. It's also a good idea to have a spare pair of underwear for in case of emergency. Consider whether medication is needed if nausea and pain is recurring and talk to Student Services about storing this for use at school. We have access to free sanitary products available to all students via the Red Box scheme. Please make sure your child is aware that Student Services will be more than prepared to help with this problem.

Conjunctivitis/Stye

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis or a stye. Do get advice from your pharmacist.

Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

Head lice and nits

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice. You should treat your child and send them into school.

Vomiting & Diarrhoea

You must keep your child at home until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for 2 days.

Anxiety/Poor Mental Health/Friendship Issues

Your child may tell you they feel sick or be anxious about coming into school for a variety of reasons. It is vital that we work together to support your child at this time so we encourage you to speak to our Pastoral Team before keeping your child at home. Our staff are highly experienced and skilled in this area.