



Our ref: TAC/kmd/gen/attendance

October 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian

Re: Attendance

At the start of the new term, we would like to remind all parents of the important role they play in securing good attendance for their child. As you may be aware, the law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education and it is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education. Parents also have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend. This is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

The guidance highlights how parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g., sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

The process for illness and absence reporting is confirmed on page 3.

Our school attendance target for this year is 96%, so we expect all students to be at or above this figure. Some parents misunderstand attendance data - while 90% may be good as a mark in a test, in attendance terms it means one day a fortnight is being missed. If a child has less than 90% attendance, the Department for Education classes them as being persistently absent from school. Where support is not working or being engaged with, it may be necessary for the Local Authority to enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

To improve attendance, maintain high levels of attendance and minimise persistent absence we will:

- Have high expectations for every student's attendance at school
- Communicate these expectations clearly, strongly and consistently to parents and to students
- Explain to parents and students why good attendance is important and how it helps students to achieve
- Listen to parents carefully to find out why their children are not attending well enough so that we can act accordingly
- Challenge parents who do not make sure that their children attend, but also offer support where needed

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- Have the right people in place to have these conversations with parents
- Ensure that attendance is always recorded accurately
- Systematically analyse attendance information so that we can see patterns and trends.

Our approach to securing good attendance for all students can be summarised as 'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate'. If you would like to discuss any matters relating to your child's attendance, please contact their Head of Year in the first instance:

Year 7	Chris Smith	Chris.smith2@oldburywells.com
Year 8 & 9	Joe Walker	Joe.walker@oldburywells.com
Assistant Headteacher KS3	Becky Lawson	Becky.lawson@oldburywells.com
Year 10 & 11	Terry Cowburn	Terry.Cowburn@oldburywells.com
Assistant Headteacher KS4	April Bishell	April.Bishell@oldburywells.com

Thank for your support in securing good attendance for your child.

Yours faithfully



Mr C Smith
Head of Year 7



Mr J Walker
Head of Year 8/9



Mr T Cowburn
Head of Year 10/11

[Illness and Absence Reporting outlined on next page]

Illness and Absence Reporting

We realise that there may be occasions when your child will be too ill to attend school, however, your child could go to school if they have one of the following symptoms:

- Headache
- Earache
- Stomach ache
- Cough
- Cold
- Sore throat
- Headlice (treat head lice as soon as you spot them - you should check everyone in the house and start treating anyone who has head lice on the same day)

Should this be the case, you could give them paracetamol and plenty of fluids to drink before school.

As you will be aware, teachers and other school staff will usually attend work if they have a cough, cold or sore throat, as would most parents.

If your child has diarrhoea or is vomiting, they need to be kept off school until they are better, however, as in all cases of illness, parental judgement should be used to decide whether to keep the child off school and for how long. If the vomiting is caused by an allergy or travel sickness, it may not be necessary for the child to have time off school. (Unlike at primary school, your child does not have to be absent for 48hrs after they have been sick. If you feel they are well enough, they can come back to school).

I would also like to remind you of our procedure for children who have unexplained absences from school.

There have been public cases in the past where schools have not chased up the reasons as to why children are not in school. It has then transpired that there have been tragic circumstances around these absences, for example, illness of a parent and a child unable to seek help.

We will do everything we can to prevent such situations occurring, as I am sure you would agree that your child's safety is paramount to us all.

If your child is not going to be in school, please call the absence line on 01746 765454 (Option 1) or email attendance@oldburywells.com to report their absence. Please do this before 8.40am on the first day of the absence and on every other day of absence that follows.

If we have not heard from you by 8.40am, a text message will be sent, asking you to confirm your child is absent. Should you not reply to this text message, we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence. If we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is, then we will make a home visit. Following a home visit, if we still have not been able to get a response, we will report this matter to the police and your child will then be classed as a 'missing child'.

This procedure is to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe. Please let us know in good time why your child is absent from school, if they are unable to attend.

Where possible, dentist and medical appointments should be made outside of school time. Any medical appointments taking place during school time should be emailed to attendance@oldburywells.com.

Any requests for a leave of absence must be made in writing to Mr Tristham, our Headteacher using the [Leave of Absence Form](#). Parents should be aware that holidays during term time cannot be authorised.

Finally, please ensure that if you move house or your contact details change, school are made aware of this at the earliest opportunity.

Thank you in advance for supporting Oldbury Wells School and your child by following these guidelines.