

30 August 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

At Patchway Community School, we firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential for the educational progress and overall wellbeing of our learners. We hope that this letter helps you to keep in mind the key aspects of our attendance policy, which you can find on our website ([link](#)). This policy has recently been updated following the Department for Education updating statutory guidance to schools, which came into force on 18th August 2024.

We want to work together with parents and carers to remove any barriers to being in school.

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 learners may face challenges that impact their attendance. Our school's attendance team is here to provide support and guidance to learners and their families in such situations. If you encounter any difficulties related to attendance, please do reach out to Harry Marson-Strutt, Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance by email harry.marsonstrutt@olympustrust.co.uk.

Acceptable reasons for absence

We recognise that there are circumstances where a learner's absence cannot 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. Further guidance about illness can be found here [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)
- **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 learners. If your child needs to be absent for religious observance, please submit a request and the headteacher will review it
- **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 ask that you follow these steps:

1. **Contact the school:** on the day of the absence, please use the Studybugs app to inform school.
2. **Provide a reason for absence:** please provide an explanation for the absence to help us maintain accurate records

Term-time holidays

Term-time holidays are 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 holiday request form ([link](#)) to the Headteacher well in advance. The Headteacher will carefully consider each request and, if deemed appropriate and in the best interests 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 learner's educational welfare as the utmost priority. We appreciate your co-operation and understanding regarding our approach to term-time holidays.

Sanctions for unauthorised absence

The Headteacher may issue a fine (known as a fixed-penalty notice) for unauthorised absence. This included unauthorised absences due to no valid reason being provided and holidays. If issued with one, you will need to pay this directly to the local authority – £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

The decision whether to issue a fine will take into account whether the national threshold has been met – namely 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks – as well as other factors.

Before a fine is issued, you may receive a notice to improve to give you a chance to engage with support.

Rewards for good attendance

We value and recognise good attendance at Patchway Community School. Learners who maintain excellent attendance records throughout the academic year are eligible for special rewards and recognition.

- Pupils who achieve 100% attendance each week receive 3 reward points and are entered into a raffle with 1 prize per year group per week.
- Certificates are given to pupils who have 100% attendance for a term
- Certificates are given to pupils who have 100% attendance for a year

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

My question hasn't been answered here

Please get in touch with Harry Marson-Strutt, Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance by email (harry.marsonstrutt@olympustrust.co.uk) with any further questions, and we will be happy to discuss them with you.

Thank you for your co-operation in making sure your child receives the best possible educational experience.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Stephen Kneller
Headteacher