



# St Albans Girls' School

Learning for Life in a Community where All can Excel

6 September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

## Re: School Attendance and Punctuality

At St Albans Girls' School, we want all of our students to enjoy school and achieve their potential. We are committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. Our attendance target is 96% and our aim is for our students to exceed this level, enabling them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and improve their future life chances. We would appreciate your support to ensure that your child achieves this.

Our School Attendance Policy can be found on the school's website. As part of this policy, the school would like to keep parents informed regarding attendance and will contact parents in writing when attendance drops below 93%.

Parents are responsible by law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, punctually and ready to learn. Children with attendance under 90% are classified by the Department for Education as Persistent Absentees.

Please note that absence due to compliance with COVID 19 guidance does not affect a student's attendance record. For example;

- isolating after travelling abroad when the country in question is on the quarantine list
- adherence to the UK's Track and Trace System
- isolating whilst waiting for the results of a PCR test
- isolation due to another verified reason e.g. awaiting a hospital procedure

Please note that parents cannot choose to isolate their child due to COVID 19 unless it is for one of the reasons above.

If your child is absent from school, please contact us on each day of the absence via Edulink or [absence@stags.herts.sch.uk](mailto:absence@stags.herts.sch.uk), and provide the reason. It is the Head Teacher's decision as to whether this absence is authorised or not. In most cases, absence is genuine and marked as authorised on the register.

The school day consists of two sessions, the morning and the afternoon. Registers are taken twice daily at 8.35 am and 2.10pm. If your daughter/son arrives after 8.35am they will be marked late. Morning registers close at 9.35am. Should your child arrive after the register has been closed, this will be marked as a half day unauthorised absence unless a reasonable explanation is provided. The school will follow up lateness, unauthorised absence and students with low levels of attendance.

Head Teacher: Mrs M Chapman  
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Ongoing poor attendance and/or punctuality may result in the school making a request to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice (explanation below) or a referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer when court proceedings may be considered.

If a student has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term, including leave of absence where permission has not been requested or requested and denied, the Head Teacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Separate notices are sent to each parent for each child. Parents can discharge potential liability for conviction by paying the penalty. Should the fine not be paid in full within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider prosecution.

## Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that 'Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances', outlining the conditions under which leave of absence may be granted. Should parents/carers need to request leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances, a copy of the relevant form is available on the school website and should be returned to me no less than 4 weeks before the date that you are requesting the period of absence to start. I will inform you of my decision in writing and may request an appointment with you.

May I remind you that the school operates Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence of 15 or more sessions across the current and/or previous term. Leave of absence will be unauthorised:

1. should a request for leave of absence be declined but the time taken
2. if a parent/carer takes a child out of school for leave of absence without requesting permission
3. when a child fails to return to school following authorised leave of absence for exceptional circumstances on the agreed date.

Unauthorised leave of absence of 15 or more sessions may lead to a Penalty Notice being initiated. Further information can be found in the school's Attendance Policy and on our website.

Our aim is to work with you and our students to ensure the best possible attendance so that the courses of action, outlined above, are not necessary.

Yours sincerely

Mrs M Chapman  
Headteacher

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