



19th March 2024

Reminding you of our shared Attendance expectations, policies and support available

Dear Parents and guardians,

With another term nearly completed and a school holiday coming up, I thought it timely to take the opportunity to both communicate and remind parents of our attendance expectations, policies and procedures in relation to student absences.

Attendance is taken very seriously at Malbank School and Sixth Form college and our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential. Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

If you do need to advise the school of absences, you can do this in a variety of ways: via our dedicated absence email address absence@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk by leaving a message on the school's absence line or emailing our key stage teams. We request that you do this before 8.30am and on each day of the absence from school.

Leave of absence

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind parents about **Holidays during term time**.

A specific policy to ensure clarity and consistency was approved by our Governing body last academic year and can be found on our website or the following link:

<https://www.malbank.com/attachments/download.asp?file=374&type=pdf>

The extract below is taken from the Cheshire East website:

You do not have the right to take children on holiday in term time. Head teachers can only give permission to take a child out of school when there are exceptional circumstances.

Details about what the school counts as exceptional circumstances are agreed by the head teacher and governors are included in the school's attendance policy but it must be noted that these are rarely granted.

Headteacher: John D. Harrison B.A. (Hons.)

Welsh Row - Nantwich - Cheshire - CW5 5HD - Tel: 01270 611009 - Email: admin@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk

Web site: www.malbank.com



If you want to take your children out of school, you must apply to the Head Teacher in writing explaining any exceptional circumstances. The Head will follow the school's attendance policy to decide whether or not to approve the application. They will then write to you with their decision'.

In the majority of circumstances, when the head does not approve the application, and you still take the child out of school, the school will record the absence as unauthorised. You may then get a school absence penalty notice (fine). Full details of this can be found in our Attendance Policy on the school website or at <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-attendance/action-when-children-miss-school.aspx#schoolabsencefine>

Illness guidelines

If your son/daughter feel ill whilst at school, our trained first Student services support team will use their professional judgement, and of course any shared/recent or historical medical information relating to them when deciding as to whether they can stay in school or, in unusual circumstances have to be picked up and taken home. We discourage students calling home themselves to inform you of any illness or feeling unwell as we are aware that this can cause increased anxiety and worry for you. As such we would ask that you only come to pick your son/daughter up when a member of our team has contacted you to advise you to do so.

We will endeavour to keep all children in school if they have minor or mild symptoms which can be managed by pain relief. It is now common proactive for our staff to call home and ask for permission to administer paracetamol with parental consent which we have on site to support our young people. This was a key change we made earlier this year and the policy supporting it can be found here on our website: <https://www.malbank.com/attachments/download.asp?file=518&type=pdf>

Below are some pertinent points from a letter sent to all Headteachers and Local authorities at the start of this academic year – the full letter can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance>

There is wide agreement among health professionals and educational professionals that school attendance is vital to the life chances of children and young people. Being in school improves health, wellbeing and socialisation throughout the life course. The greatest benefits come from children and young people attending school regularly.


It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of



38°C or above. We would encourage you to share the [NHS 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance](#) with parents and carers in your schools and communities which has further information.

In addition to respiratory illnesses, we are aware that more children may be absent from school due to symptoms of anxiety than before the pandemic. Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it. DfE has published useful [guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance](#) and those who are experiencing persistent symptoms can be encouraged to access additional support.

Punctuality

School begins at 08:45



Every school day counts BUT every minute is equally important!

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Attendance and the Law

If you continue to fail in your responsibility, you may:

Receive a Penalty Notice. This is a fine of £120 to be paid within 28 days, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the notice being served. The fine can be issued for truancy, holidays in term time or poor attendance/punctuality. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution.

Be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court. This could result in a fine of up to £2,500 per responsible adult or up to 3 months imprisonment.

At Malbank, both the education and safeguarding of all pupils/students is an utmost priority, and to ensure that we fulfil our responsibilities to safeguard all pupils, student/pupils that are **absent from school without a reason or communication from parents/carers**, may receive a welfare check, from one of our Attendance and Welfare team or from our Cheshire East Education Family support worker, and be offered support and encouragement for your child to attend. When students' absence is deemed to be '**extended**', our Attendance and Welfare team may also undertake home visits: this is in-line with our statutory Safeguarding policies.

All information and related policies can be found on our website or by following this link: <https://www.malbank.com/page/?title=Attendance&pid=130>

How you can support as parents and carers:

- ✓ Talk to your child about school.
- ✓ Take a positive interest in your child's work, including homework.
- ✓ Attend Parents' Evening and other school events.
- ✓ Make sure you know your child's attendance.
- ✓ All students should **aim** to achieve at least 95%.
- ✓ Try not to make medical appointments for your child during school time. If this cannot be avoided, **send them in for the rest of the day**. You should send the appointment letter/card as evidence with a note signed by you.
- ✓ Make sure that you contact school before 8.30am each day that your child is absent to provide a reason.
- ✓ As a parent/carer it is your responsibility to ensure that your child attends school both regularly and on time.

If you require any further information regarding the information above, please do not hesitate the relevant Key Stage team or me via email jzm@malbank.cheshire.sch.uk or look at our school website for more information regarding attendance in our policy and procedures section.



Malbank School and Sixth Form College



Rejoice in being the best that we can be

Many thanks for your continued support,

Julie Machin

Assistant Head

Attendance Lead

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