



22<sup>nd</sup> October 2024  
GAu/SSn

Dear Parents/Carers,

I would like to introduce myself as the new Attendance and Student Support Officer, Miss Austen.

At the Malling School, for all our pupils to achieve high standards we expect good attendance and punctuality. This responsibility lies with the parents/carers and the school. We are creating an inclusive culture in the school; we seek to support our pupils so that they experience school as a place they want to be.

The new government guidance emphasises the importance of working with parents and carers and we are fortunate to have a skilled Pastoral team, who continue to support families when there are attendance issues.

This letter contains useful information about the new government guidelines 'Working Together to Improve Attendance,' and our own school policies. The aim of this is to encourage collaboration between school and families and ensure more accurate reporting of student absences.

Children are required by law to attend school 190 days a year. The government states that every pupil's attendance should be at least 96%. Each year, for every 2 days a pupil is absent, it reduces their attendance by 1%. There is a direct link between attendance and high academic attainment.

### Medical

Where it is possible, it is encouraged that medical appointments should be made for out of school hours. If this is not possible, please ensure that your child attends school directly before/after the appointment. Please provide evidence of appointments as this enables us to support by authorising the absence.

### Unwell during school

Should a student feel unwell whilst at school, their first port of call will be their Guidance Manager, who will determine after a discussion with the student if they are able to continue with the school day. Parental contact will always be made before any student leaves site. Thank you for ensuring that all your contact details are up to date and if any details have changed please contact reception to provide an update.



## Attendance Monitoring

Parents/carers are expected to call the school before 8:45am if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. Please contact the attendance office on 01732 840995, select Option 3, and leave a message if there is no answer. Absence should continue to be reported daily unless a medical note has been supplied stating the period of absence which can be approved by school. The school will not always be able to authorise non-specific illness, for example 'poorly/unwell', and our attendance team may query this and seek medical evidence to enable us to authorise those absences.

Attendance is monitored daily by the attendance officers. If your child's attendance has dropped below 96% you will receive correspondence from the school to discuss the reasoning for this. This will continue to be monitored over the following weeks.

If there is no improvement and attendance is continuing to drop you will be asked to attend a meeting at school. This is to offer support and gain a better understanding of your child's absences and any barriers to good attendance. If the concerns cannot be resolved, we may wish to involve the School Liaison Officer SLO. The SLO can issue penalties and even prosecute, if a child's attendance does not improve. If the student's attendance drops below 90%, they are classified as a persistent absentee.

### The new government guidelines state:

*Parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the local authority or governing body has arranged alternative provision (under sections 444 and 444ZA). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000), or if the parent is found to have known the child was not attending regularly and failed to ensure that they did so, a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months. • Parents who persistently fail to comply with directions under an Education Supervision Order (under Schedule 3 to the Children Act 1989) or breach a Parenting Order or directions under the order (under section 375 of the Sentencing Act 2020). These may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).*

### For holiday related absences:

- *The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.*
- *A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.*
- *A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.*



### **Lates and truancy:**

From 8:50am the only gate you can enter the school site will be the front gate next to the nursery. This will be implemented from 23<sup>rd</sup> September. Late arrival to lessons will receive an L code on the register. These codes will be monitored, and sanctions issued when trigger points are hit.

Number of late codes in one term	Sanction
3	Every 3 lates triggers an after-school reflection. At 3 lates there is a supportive meeting held with parents/carers and the Pastoral Leader
5	Meeting held with a member of the Senior Leadership Team
10	Meeting held with a Deputy Headteacher
Failure to improve	Off-Site reflections at our partner schools, Possible IYFA referral for Off-site Direction or MMAP placement. Suspensions and Permanent Exclusion.
1 truancy or significantly late code	SLT reflection and same-day parental meeting, OSR's and further escalations.

We want to thank you all for your continued support with getting your children into school daily and on time. I know there is a lot of information to take in. If you have any queries or questions, please contact me through the main attendance email: [attendance@themallingschool.kent.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@themallingschool.kent.sch.uk).

Yours sincerely,



**Miss G Austen**  
**Attendance and Student Support Co-ordinator**

