

Dear Parent/Carer,

Toot Hill is committed to maximising education opportunities and achievement for all of their students. In order for students to gain the best from their time here, it is vital that their attendance and punctuality is outstanding. We are therefore writing to clarify procedures for pupil absence and parental responsibility.

The DFE has advised the importance of keeping your child's attendance above 96%, as all government research and experience shows, that dropping below this percentage is likely to contribute to a pupil dropping at least a grade in their GCSES. Any absence from school interrupts the continuity of students learning and so we request your support in ensuring your child attends school, on time, every day.

Absence for illness or unforeseen circumstances during term time

If your child is too unwell to attend school, please ensure that you contact Students Services via the schools number 01949 863063 or email students services directly on; studentservices@toothillschool.co.uk to report your child's illness or reason for being absent. This should be done before 9am.

To support your child through any illness/injury we can offer the following;

- A later start or early finish
- Complete a half day (morning or afternoon)
- We can hold medication at student services
- Offer a quiet, supervised study room, close to toilets
- Make individual arrangements for pupils with injured limbs

If your child needs to be off school for the whole day, please make sure you inform student services **on each day of their absence**, if you do not contact Student Services, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Please also be aware that we require medical evidence such as a doctor's note, appointment card/text or prescription when your child is off sick for 3 days or more.

There are a few occasions when parents ask to take their children out of school for a family holiday during term time. If a parent intends to take their child out of school for a leave of absence during term time, due to exceptional circumstances, they must have requested this in advance and had their request agreed by the School. Failure to do this will result in an unauthorised absence.

Upon receipt of the form a member of Student Services will make direct contact with you to advise you on the implications of taking your child out of school during term time. Following this, you will then be advised as whether or not the absence will be authorised or unauthorised, whereupon it will be for you to determine what action you wish to take.

Unauthorised absence is recorded on your child's school records and will be requested by colleges or apprenticeship providers. Attendance percentages, absenteeism and unauthorised absence is closely monitored by Family Services (a branch of Social Care who are responsible for attendance at Nottinghamshire County Council) and, of course, OFSTED, and attendance statistics have to be returned to the DFE annually.

If pupils accrue a significant amount of unauthorised absence, then school will be obliged to refer the incident to Family Service who may allocate a support worker to the family or may then issue a Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure the regular attendance of their child. The Penalty Notice is set at £120 and should be paid within 42 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £60.

In Nottinghamshire, you could receive a fine if your child has either:

- 3 days unauthorised absence over a 6 week period
- 3 or more days unauthorised absence, where this is for the purpose of a holiday in term time.

We hope that you appreciate how crucial good school attendance is to your child's progress, achievement and life opportunities. We look forward to working with you to ensure that your child's attendance is the very best it can be, and hope that you feel supported via this letter to avoid/minimise the need for any unauthorised absence.

If you feel there is anything we can do to support you or your child, or would like to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact Student Services or your child's tutor.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Ms J Gray
Pastoral School Lead