

July 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

**Manchester City Council's School Attendance Team Working in
Partnership with St Paul's Catholic High School to Improve School
Attendance**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL PARENT/CARERS

St Paul's Catholic High School has been working hard to improve the attendance and punctuality of all pupils. It is widely recognised that the educational outcomes and future life chances of children and young people can be significantly impacted upon by periods of absence and poor punctuality. Therefore we want to encourage parents to ensure that their child attends school every day and on time. We do appreciate the fact that a significant number of pupils have excellent attendance and punctuality and this should be commended. School is in session for 190 days, leaving 175 school holidays for families to take trips, visits and holidays.

Manchester City Council's School Attendance Team are working closely with St Paul's Catholic High School to address levels of unauthorised absence recorded by some pupils, especially those parents removing their child/ren during term time for holidays. We fully appreciate that there may be occasions when a pupil's attendance and punctuality may be affected due to exceptional circumstances. In these cases support and advice will always be available from the school. Unfortunately, despite this support, attendance and punctuality levels for some pupils continue to fall below the school's expectations. All pupils' attendance and punctuality is now closely monitored by the local authority and school. Only the head teacher can authorise any leave of absence during term time. Requests for leave of absence in term time must be made in writing to the head teacher and if not authorised will be considered by the local authority for statutory action. Any leave not applied for will not be authorised retrospectively and those parents are now warned they will be considered for statutory action. Pupils arriving late for school not only impacts on the late arrival, but also on the teacher and the rest of the class as it interrupts the learning and the teacher then may need to spend time repeating what has already been said. This is not acceptable and will be addressed as unauthorised absence and considered for statutory action.

All parents/carers are now warned that from the date of this letter statutory action will be considered for any unauthorised absences recorded. Absences may be used both prior to the date of this letter and following the date of this letter. Parent/carers who have previously received penalty notices are now warned that if their child/ren record any further unauthorised absences you may not be given the option of penalty notices but considered for a direct prosecution which will include a formal interview at the town hall to discuss the reasons for their child's poor school attendance and punctuality. For those parents who do not attend the interview, or do not have reasonable explanations for their child's absence, it may lead to statutory action which could be a summons to appear before the City Magistrates to explain the reasons for their child's absences from school.

PENALTY NOTICES - (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003)

A penalty notice will be issued to each parent for each child. The penalty notice incurs a fine of £120 to be paid within 28 days, which is reduced to £60 if paid within the first 21 days.

Failure to pay the penalty notice may result in legal proceedings being taken against you. Other statutory action may also be considered under the Education Act 1996, which may result in you being prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court. If you are found guilty, you will receive a criminal record and may receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or three months' imprisonment.

DIRECT PROSECUTION – Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

Parents will be invited to the Town Hall to be interviewed under PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence). This is a formal interview which is recorded and may be used in evidence. Parents are interviewed separately and may be accompanied by a solicitor. If found guilty at court the parents will receive a criminal record and magistrates may deal with the matters by way of fines up to £2500 and/or custodial sentence of up to 3 months imprisonment for each parent.

If your child is experiencing any problems that may be affecting their attendance or punctuality, then please contact the school on 0161 499 0000 to discuss any support that could be provided to ensure their regular attendance.

School starts each day at 8.40am. Pupils arriving after this time may be recorded with unauthorised absence and could be subject to statutory action.

Once again thank you for supporting St Paul's Catholic High School in improving attendance, which will ensure that all pupils in school have the opportunity to reach their full potential and improve outcomes for their future life chances.

Yours sincerely

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