



Westlands Primary School

A member of Swale Academies Trust



Headteacher: Mrs V Pettett
Deputy Headteacher: Mrs J Burr
ME10 1XN
e-mail: wpsoffice@swale.at

Homewood Avenue
Sittingbourne
Kent

Tel: 01795 470862

1st February 2024

Dear Parents/Carers,

From September, the DfE are making changes to the way we process holiday requests and fines. We will also be having a strong focus on attendance, we are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly as it is important for your child's friendships and academic progress. In addition, it is proven that good attendance is linked with academic success. We will be regularly reviewing children's attendance, and sending out regular attendance letters to all parents.

The attendance policy is available on our website and attached is a leaflet from KCC which we will be following.

Key points coming in from September and some reminders:

- **HOLIDAY REQUESTS** - Holiday/absence need to be requested in advance to the Headteacher. Requests can be completed on Weduc (in forms, absence requests) or sent in by email. Headteachers are unable to agree leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied there are exceptional circumstances. Some additional changes came into force in August 2024, which means there is no longer scope to authorise a term-time holiday in any circumstances. Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.
- **PRICES OF FINES and new 3 year rolling period** - prices of fines are increasing, they will now be £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued within a rolling 3-year period, then the second penalty notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. In both instances failure to pay the penalty in full at the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Attendance Service. In the event of a three or more periods of unauthorised absence within a 3 rolling year period, a penalty notice will not be issued. A referral will be made to Kent PRU and Attendance Service Courts Team who will consider the case for prosecution. In addition, there will not be the opportunity to discharge a third period by way of a penalty.
- **ILLNESS** - Please ensure you let the school office know by 9am the reason for your child's absence. You can let the office know by calling 01795 470862 or sending a Weduc message. Failure to inform us of your child's absence will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised. If your child is off unwell for 3 days or more, we may require medical evidence in order to approve any further absences as Illness.
- **LATE** - Pupils should arrive at school during their class door opening times. Doors open from 8.30am and close 8.40. Any children arriving through the office after 8.40 will be recorded and late. Any students arriving after 9.15 will be recorded as unauthorised late. **Persistent lateness can also result in a penalty**



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notice. The school can request that the local authority issues a penalty notice related to lateness when a child has arrived late for 10 or more sessions after the register has been closed. The national threshold has

been met when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks.

- **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS** - If your child is taking time off for medical appointments, please bring in proof of the appointment. This could be bringing in a copy of the letter, showing us a text message, or appointment card. You can also email these to us or send via Weduc message. We keep these appointment proofs on your child's file to approve as medical absence. Medical appointments should be made out of school time where possible, unless emergency appointments or scheduled hospital appointments. We also ask that children come in before/after their appointment where possible to avoid losing too much learning time.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation.

Kind Regards

Mrs Abbott & Mrs Oswald
Attendance Team