

Harris Westminster Student Absence Protocol

Attendance at school is a vitally important element in academic success: students should be in lessons every day unless there are overpoweringly good reasons for their absence. Students with poor attendance will be asked to meet the Welfare Officer with their parents and appropriate members of the pastoral team. The Absence Protocol outlined below ensures clear communication between HWSF and parents; should it not be followed authorization of absences may not be guaranteed.

Sickness – If students have hard signs of sickness (a high fever, for example, or vomiting) then they should be kept out of school and **an email should be sent to attendance@harriswestminstersixthform.org.uk by 9.00am** with this information. If the illness extends beyond a couple of days or if there are more than two bouts of illness in a year then medical advice should be sought.

Feeling unwell – It is generally unnecessary for students to miss school due to feeling unwell. Unless they fall into one of the categories above they should make every effort to come into school in the morning.

Medical Advice – If the student is advised by the medical staff of a GP surgery or hospital not to attend school due to an illness or accident then this advice should be followed. In this case enquiries should be informed as soon as possible and a copy of the doctor's letter or appointment card should be provided by email or on the student's return to school.

Medical/Dental appointments – These should be made outside school time wherever possible. If attending an appointment will result in missing school, then attendance@harriswestminstersixthform.org.uk should be contacted **at least 48 hours before the absence** and the appointment card should be shown to reception.

Holidays – Under no circumstances should students take holiday during the school terms: time at Harris Westminster is extremely limited and precious and students have considerable vacations during which time away can be organised.

Exam leave – For external and some internal exams, students will receive authorised exam leave. Parents and students will be informed of this in advance. This leave is carefully calculated to provide maximum benefit to students' education – unauthorised exam leave is detrimental to learning.

Other Absence – Absence may be authorised for other good reasons but should be limited as far as possible. If unavoidable absence is known about in advance, permission should be sought from the Attendance Team at least 48 hours before the absence; if the absence is due to an emergency, an email should be sent to attendance at the earliest opportunity.

Lateness – Punctuality is key to scholarship: lateness for school has an immediate impact on learning; it is a sign that learning is not being taken adequately seriously; and it is rude to those who are on time. Students should arrange their journeys so that under normal circumstances they arrive by 8.30am – on the rare occasions when they are delayed despite this precaution they should email attendance or call the school on 020 3772 4555 to let us know. Students who are late to school more than five times during the year will receive sanctions, including the suspension of any bursary they receive.

Persistent absence – Students should be in school on all, or almost all days during the school terms. If attendance drops below 95% this is a serious concern and unless there is an excellent reason – such as a significant medical problem under the care of a doctor – **students will no longer be entitled to any bursaries through Harris Westminster**. This may also affect university or employment references and will, for Year 12 students, have an effect on their readiness to return in Year 13.

Telephone: 0203 7724 555

**If the line is busy, please leave a voicemail message with the student's name and the reason for their absence.*

E-mail: attendance@harriswestminstersixthform.org.uk