

# **Colston's Girls' School**

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

**2019 – 2020**

### **A Guide for Parents/Carers**

**Missing school seriously affects life opportunities**

# Attendance & Absence

All pupils should be targeting to achieve 100% attendance. Good school attendance and punctuality to lessons gives your child the opportunity of success and helps develop skills for life. Your daughter should attend school every day unless there is an unavoidable cause such as illness.

Each year there are 180 days when pupils are expected to attend Colston's Girls' School on time and ready to learn. We will not authorise absence for shopping trips, birthday treats, non-urgent medical and routine dental appointments and other events, which should never fall within this critical learning time.

It is important to remember that it is up to the school to authorise a pupil's absence from school in all situations. A letter or telephone call from a parent/carer does not in itself authorise the absence. Your daughter's attendance will be monitored on a weekly basis by the Attendance Officer and her Head of House. A planned absence will only be authorised if a fully completed absence request form has been received and authorised by the school.

## **Missing school seriously affects life opportunities.**

Authorisation of all leave of absence requests will be based on the pupil's attendance to date, whether the absence will be detrimental to their education and whether the reason for the leave of absence is deemed by the School to benefit the pupil.

Colston's Girls' School appreciates that pupils are unwell from time to time and there can be exceptional circumstances for absences but asks that parents/carers think carefully about keeping their daughters out of school. There is a strong connection between attendance and achievement at school. Absence is proven to have a significantly negative impact upon a child's educational attainment and future opportunities in life.

A pupil who misses a day of school per week throughout Years 7 to 11 misses an equivalent of nearly one year of their learning time in school.

Attendance over one academic year if a pupil had:

98% attendance = fewer than 4 days absent from school

90% attendance = 4 weeks absent from school

80% attendance = 7½ weeks absent from school (equivalent to one day per week absence for the whole year).

## ABSENCES

### Leave of Absence

The procedure for requesting Leave of Absence is as follows:

1. A Leave of Absence form is available from Pupil Reception or from the school website. This form must be completed by a parent/carer and returned to the Attendance Officer (based in Pupil Reception).
2. This form plus a Leave of Absence Response Form will then be forwarded to the Assistant Principal (or delegated staff member) who will liaise with the Head of House and a decision will be made regarding authorisation.
3. The Attendance Officer will return the Leave of Absence Response Form with a final decision.
4. Leave of Absence requests will not be approved retrospectively.

A Leave of Absence request will need to be made for such events as music/dance exams, external GCSE exams.

Visits to consulates for passport/visa renewals should be made for during the school holidays and will not be authorised.

### Absence for Illness

The procedure for advising the school of an absence due to illness:

1. Parents/carers are asked to telephone the Pupil Absence telephone line on **0117 942 4328 (option 1)** or by email [attendance@colstonsgirls.bristol.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@colstonsgirls.bristol.sch.uk) as early as possible on the first day of illness, **but no later than 8.30 am**. They must clearly state the pupil's full name, tutor group, details of illness (rather than "unwell") and expected date of return. It is useful for the school to be aware of specific illnesses to monitor trends within the school. We will not accept a telephone call or email from a pupil and this includes sixth form pupils.
2. If the pupil continues to be ill then parents/carers are requested to call again on day 3 of the absence to update the school giving a new expected date of return. If the illness persists for longer than one week then evidence that the pupil has been taken to see a doctor will be required.

0117 942 4328

option 1



The school will not authorise absence for repeated recurrence of the same illness without valid evidence.

## **Medical/Dental Appointments**

Only emergency medical appointments and unavoidable medical appointments, such as orthodontic or hospital visits, will be authorised and supporting official documentation (i.e. appointment card, copy of email confirmation) will need to be provided in advance of the appointment. This information will be recorded in the register so that your daughter's teachers are aware that she may need to leave the classroom part way through a lesson. Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school site unless we have a record of this notification. For their own safety, pupils will not be able to leave the school premises on their own to travel to an appointment and must be collected by a parent/carer, unless there is explicit permission from the parent/carer.

Parents/carers may wish to bear in mind that pupils receive two session marks per day, at 8.35 am and 1.45 pm, and being absent due to medical appointments at these points in the day will affect your daughter's overall attendance figure.

All routine medical and dental appointments must be made outside of school hours. These appointments, and those not pre-notified to the school, will be recorded in the register as an unauthorised absence.

If an urgent medical appointment is required and your daughter will miss her first lesson, parents/carers should leave a message on the Pupil Absence telephone line (0117 942 4328, option 1) with an indication of when the pupil is expected to arrive at school. The pupil should hand in evidence of the urgent medical appointment when signing in at Pupil Reception on arrival.

## **Request for absence during term time**

Parents/carers do not have the right to take their children out of school for family holidays and are strongly advised to avoid this.

If parents/carers are considering this, they must seek approval from the Assistant Principal by completing a Leave of Absence request form, in advance. It is not possible to seek authorisation retrospectively.

The Assistant Principal will judge each request on a case by case basis.

Should parents/carers wish to appeal they should contact the Principal, who will review and determine if the request is reasonable.

The following, according to Department of Education guidance, could be considered reasonable justification for the use of the Principal's discretion:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Significant family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis. However, the following would **not** be considered reasonable:
  - Relatives coming to visit
  - Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
  - Family day trips
  - Visiting family/friends who have different half terms or holidays.

It is for the Principal to determine if a request to take a child out of school on a family holiday is reasonable.

### **Absence for Religious Observance**

Requests for leave of absence for days of religious observance should be made in writing (procedure as above). Where a leave of absence has not been authorised in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Release Home**

If a pupil is taken ill or injured whilst in school, the School First Aider will obtain permission from the pupil's Head of House and arrange to contact parents/carers to organise collection.

### **Special circumstances**

**PE/Games:** A letter from the parent/carer is required to exempt a pupil from games or physical education. Exemption from games or physical education, other than for short breaks, will be granted only on receipt of a medical certificate.

**Religious Studies/Services:** Parents/carers should contact the Head of School in writing if there is good reason to ask for exemption from religious education or services, or other activities of the school.

### **Traditional School Celebration Days**

School events such as Prize Day, Commemoration Day, Charter Day, the Carol Service and the Summer Fair are part of the school tradition and attendance is compulsory.

Parents/carers have committed that their daughter will attend such events when joining the school.

Pupils are also expected to attend school events, such as Sports Day.

Any absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may count towards any penalty notice issued.

## **Unauthorised Absences**

If a pupil's absence is not verified by 8.35 am then it will be deemed as unauthorised and the code changed in the register. A message will be sent out by Schoolcomms to request that you contact the school immediately. **Unauthorised absences will remain on the pupil's record.**

**It is important that parents/carers understand their responsibilities to ensure their daughter attends school, and the consequences of their child having unauthorised absence from school.**

## **Penalty Notices**

Parents/carers commit an offence if a pupil reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised absences (5 school days). Colston's Girls' School will request a Penalty Charge Notice is issued.

The charge is £60 per parent/carer, per pupil. However, parents/carers should be aware that this amount increases if unpaid. If the local authority is successful in proceeding to court regarding unpaid fines, parents/carers can face a criminal record and fines of over £500 per parent/carer per pupil.

Penalty Charges Notices will also be requested for pupils who persistently arrive after registers have been taken at 8.35 am and recorded with a 'late' mark.

## Punctuality

We expect pupils to have a punctuality record of 100%.

The school day begins at **8.20 am, when all pupils should aim to arrive. Pupils arriving after 8.30 am will be asked to sign in at Pupil Reception. The first session register is taken at 8.35 am and the second at 1.45 pm.** The school day ends at 3.45 pm on Mondays, 3.15 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and 2.45 pm on Fridays.

The first lesson starts promptly at 8.35 am. Pupils are expected to be punctual at the start of each day and for every lesson and other time-tabled activities. Lateness hinders the education of your daughter and wastes the time of others. Please ask them to try to think ahead and show consideration for others.

| Minutes late per day during the school year | Days' worth of teaching lost in a year |
|---|--|
|---|--|

|           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| 5 Minutes | 3.4 Days |
|-----------|----------|

|            |          |
|------------|----------|
| 10 Minutes | 6.9 Days |
|------------|----------|

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| 15 Minutes | 10.3 Days |
|------------|-----------|

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| 20 Minutes | 13.8 Days |
|------------|-----------|

|            |           |
|------------|-----------|
| 30 Minutes | 20.7 Days |
|------------|-----------|

**Frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning lost, and can seriously disadvantage your child. Please help your daughter to be punctual.**

Parents/carers are asked to telephone the Pupil Absence telephone line (0117 942 4328, option 1 or e-mail [attendance@colstonsgirls.bristol.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@colstonsgirls.bristol.sch.uk) as early as possible on the first day of illness, **but no later than 8.35 am.**

Registers close at 10 am. If your daughter arrives after this time her lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence until it has been explained by a parent/carer, and she will be issued with an automatic detention with the Assistant Principal.

If due to exceptional circumstances your daughter arrives after the start of the school day she must sign in at Pupil Reception giving the reason for being late.

If your daughter arrives at school after 8.30 am, without a valid reason provided by a parent/carer, an automatic detention of 15 minutes will be given for the same day. This will be held at 3.15 or 3.45 pm. Your daughter will also receive one negative behaviour point per lateness.

If your daughter arrives after 8.45 am, without a valid reason which has been provided by a parent/carer, she will need to attend a 30 minutes detention. Parents/carers will be advised of the date and time of this detention. Your daughter will also receive three negative behaviour points per lateness.

Delayed travel arrangements will not be accepted as a valid reason. Detentions will override any after school activity she may be involved in.