



HILLINGDON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Learning and Achieving Together

Co-Principal: Ms Sabrina Kelly BEd (Hons)
Co-Principal: Ms Samina Saidiya MEd
Vice Principal: Ms Laura Mitchell BA (Hons)

E-mail: hillprimary@hillingdonprimaryschool.org.uk
www.hillingdon.hillingdon.sch.uk

Uxbridge Road,
Hillingdon
Middlesex
UB10 0PH

Tel: 01895 590087

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Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope your child/children has/have enjoyed the first few weeks of the new school year. It has been a busy half term, and the children have been working hard and making the most of the opportunities in school. Lots of learning opportunities have been captured for you to see on our school Twitter (X) account, which can be found under the handle [@Hillingdon_PS](https://twitter.com/Hillingdon_PS).

Attendance at School.

School and parents working together.

We are writing to you because the Department of Education (DfE) has introduced new statutory guidance for all schools and Local Authorities (LAs) to follow for managing school attendance. The DfE have also introduced a new national framework for the issuing of penalty notices. These changes came into effect from the 19th August 2024 and all schools across the country will be expected to follow this statutory guidance, which is called [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#). Our school's local attendance policy has been recently updated to reflect the changes in this guidance, and can be found [on our website](#).

The importance of regular attendance at school cannot be stressed enough. Every child has the right to education and to be able to take advantage of all the learning experiences they will be offered in school. We know at the end of the last academic year that some pupils did not achieve the age-expected level of attainment in Reading, Maths or Writing because of their lower attendance.

All schools are expected to promote school attendance and provide support if a child is not attending school regularly. This may mean that we raise the issue of attendance even if your child has only had a short absence from school. By working with you, we can step in early to help to prevent patterns of absence developing. Together, we may identify other underlying issues that are barriers to your child achieving good attendance, and we may be able to help you and your child. For this to be successful, we need to work together.

If your child is unwell and you are not sure whether they should come into school, please refer to the [NHS guidance](#) on this matter. Mrs Childs, our welfare and attendance officer, can also be contacted if you need further advice.



National framework for penalty notices

To provide consistency across schools, the Government has introduced a new national framework for unauthorised absence. All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.

Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country.

The threshold for when a school if this is appropriate, is **10 sessions** of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term). **A session is equivalent to one morning or one afternoon: 1 full day is 2 sessions.** When a school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, they are expected to make considerations in line with DfE statutory guidance to decide whether to issue a penalty notice in each individual case.

Further information about Penalty Notices can be found attached to the email this letter has been attached to.

Exceptional leave

Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence in term time and should only approve the leave if there are exceptional circumstances. The statutory guidance does not allow holidays in term time to be authorised. In line with our school's attendance policy, an exceptional leave form must be completed in as much detail as possible and given to the school with as much notice as possible, for us to consider.

Please be aware that unless there are exceptional circumstances, any application of leave is unlikely to be authorised.

We are always keen to work in partnership with parents to improve attendance. Please do refer to the school's attendance policy and the information leaflets for parents from the Local Authority, which is attached to the email this letter has been sent by. If you have concerns about your child's attendance, then please make contact with Ms Childs.

We look forward to working in partnership with you to further improve overall attendance in the school. We wish all and your children a peaceful and enjoyable half term break.

Best wishes,



Ms Sabrina Kelly
Co-Principal



Ms Samina Saidiya
Co-Principal