

SMU/kk

8 September, 2023

Dear Parents/Carers



### **Important School Attendance Notice to All Parents/Carers**

At the start of the new academic year, we are looking ahead and working towards the best possible start in life for all our students. For us, this includes explaining our expectations around school attendance. In line with government guidance, our minimum expected attendance rate for every student is 96%. In comparison to last academic year, many more of our students have enjoyed the benefits of coming to school every day compared to the first week of the last academic year. This is a real success that we want to build on for the rest of this year to ensure that all of our students can benefit from all that school has to offer.

Where students are frequently late to, or absent from, school whole classes can be affected, as well as their individual academic and social progress. We want to assure you that we are making every effort to ensure that your child's learning is not unduly disrupted by missing out on school, or by the frequent absence or lateness of other students.

To help parents decide whether they should allow their child a day off school when poorly, the NHS has produced guidance on common illnesses. This guidance is available via the NHS (Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>)) and underpins our decision about whether the reason provided for absence can be authorised.

The NHS message is quite clear:

- It is ok to allow a child or young person to go to school with some common or minor illnesses.
- Common colds, minor coughs, sore throats or headaches alone do not mean children are too unwell to attend school.

In line with the NHS and Department for Education expectations, only absences that are unavoidable will be authorised at Southchurch High School.

We know that a lot of children and young people are struggling with anxious thoughts and feelings, which is impacting on their willingness, and sometimes ability, to attend school. As a school, we follow Educational Psychologist and Department for Education advice regarding mental health and school attendance, and work closely with Southend City Council's Education Access Team.

The single most effective step that can be taken in the first instance is to contact us as soon as possible so that a bespoke support plan can be implemented to help your child overcome these feelings and make school an environment in which they feel safe and supported.

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Tel: 01702 900777

Email: [info@southchurchschool.com](mailto:info@southchurchschool.com)

Website: [www.southchurchschool.com](http://www.southchurchschool.com)

**Southchurch High School**, Southchurch Boulevard, Southend-on-Sea, Essex. SS2 4XA



Interim Headteacher: Mrs T Airoll

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We ask that all parents contact us at an early stage so that we can work together to resolve any problems or barriers that may arise. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way and you are invited to attend a meeting at school regarding attendance; please do try to attend, or contact us to explain any difficulties (including medical conditions) that may be preventing your child from accessing their full educational entitlement. If we are aware of the issues, we can devise a support plan to limit their impact on your child's education.

Building on our strong focus and high expectations, this academic year we will be working with an external partner called Aquinas (School Attendance Provisions) to help improve the attendance, and ensure the safeguarding, of our students.

### **Aquinas School Attendance Provisions**

Aquinas is a member of The National Association for Support Workers in Education (NASWE), as well as being an Accredited Company by Essex Police under The Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS). They work very closely with our own internal attendance and pastoral teams, as well as Local Authority's Access and Inclusion Team.

Although Aquinas holds a Police Accreditation, the legal enforcement aspect of their role is secondary to their priority of finding a positive, support-centred response to any identified barrier to the regular school attendance of our students.

Please report your child's absence from school as early as possible on each day of their absence by telephoning 01702 900777 and press 1 for Student/Staff Absence and then 1 for Student Absence. Should you wish to discuss any concerns regarding your child's attendance please contact our Attendance Officer, Mrs Kelly on 01702 900777.

I am confident that, all working together, we can ensure that all students at Southchurch High School are allowed to access the full educational experience that we can offer.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Murray', written over a set of horizontal lines.

Miss S Murray  
**Deputy Headteacher**