

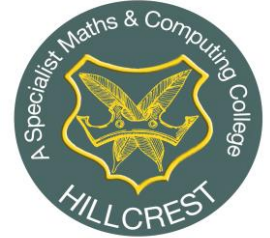
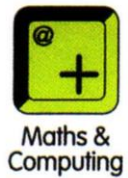


# Hillcrest School

A Specialist Maths & Computing College  
and Sixth Form Centre

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## Spotlight on Attendance

**A very important message for all parents**

8<sup>th</sup> September 2014

Dear Parent,

Hillcrest School are working in partnership with parents to improve school attendance. **We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.**

It is a requirement of the Spotlight Attendance Scheme that all parents receive a copy of the information below even if their children have very good attendance. I apologise if you find the information worrying or upsetting. In the academic year 2013-14, five parents/carers of students at Hillcrest were prosecuted and fined for failing to ensure their child attends school regularly. The fines ranged from £125 to £750.

Excellent attendance and punctuality are key elements of our 'Getting It Right' scheme and we would like to remind parents of their role in encouraging their child to attend school every day, arrive to school and lessons on time, complete their homework and bring the correct equipment to school for their lessons.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

Absence disrupts the education of the individual student and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006.

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration. Leave in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

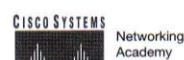
'Staff are very caring and students appreciate the support that they receive.'

'The school's 'getting it right' policy is instrumental in managing the positive behaviour seen across school.'

(Ofsted 2012)

"Hillcrest is an **outstanding school** that has an **excellent reputation**." OFSTED 2009

"Outstanding care, guidance and support and an **excellent curriculum**, together with good teaching, enable students to make **exceptional progress**." OFSTED 2009



**Legal action that may be taken include:**

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

**Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.**

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

**Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.**

If your child's level of absence is of serious concern you will receive another letter advising you about improving attendance. After this, any further unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

We will improve attendance by making it clear within the school and local community that unauthorised absence is not acceptable. You will be informed of the number of penalty notices issued, prosecutions and the level of fines.

**Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefiting fully from their educational opportunity.**

Yours sincerely,



Mrs J Davies  
Head Teacher