



OLD BUCKENHAM
HIGH SCHOOL

Achieving excellence together

Be the best we can be

3rd September 2020

Dear Parent/Carer,

Being the best we can be

To start the new academic year and build on the great work undertaken during the school closure, we have adopted a new logo that sums up our aspirations and approach going forward. You will see this logo on all that we publish and I hope you will support us.

I am sure that your son or daughter is feeling both excited and anxious about coming back to school and this is why we have put plans in place to make sure they feel supported and looked after. Government advice has been confusing and often changes and sometimes it takes us by surprise. I would encourage you to check the government website regularly, particularly if you are concerned about what to do if you are worried about coronavirus symptoms.

<https://www.obhs.co.uk/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>

Face Coverings

Following the change in government advice regarding face coverings in schools, I have taken the decision to allow face coverings to be worn by students around the school site. Students may be permitted to use face coverings in lessons either by prior arrangement or by the discretion of the teacher. If a student behaves in such a way that undermines the smooth running of a lesson by the inappropriate use of a face covering, he/she will be asked to remove the face covering or will be exited from the lesson. It is important to note that it is compulsory for students to wear face coverings on school transport. Due to the changing nature of the government guidance, this policy will be under constant review.

Uniform

School ties are no longer needed to be worn until further notice. All other aspects of the uniform code need to be adhered to. It would be very helpful if parents could check that students are following expectations regarding jewellery and nail polish.



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Attendance at school and legal intervention

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At Old Buckenham High School our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our students receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers regarding the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

In the DfE policy document entitled, 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' it states, '*Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. **The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.***'

If the school does not receive a request for leave, the head teacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the head teacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any student will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have:

- at least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the student during the last 6 school weeks

The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice. Any student at Old Buckenham High School who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a fixed penalty notice is issued the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the penalty notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of the notice. The fixed penalty notice is per parent per child. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.



However, we are very aware of the issues regarding school attendance and the current covid situation. We will always discuss attendance issues in the first instance and it is important that we are kept informed of such matters.

Yours sincerely,



Mr A Fell
Headteacher

