

23 April 2021

Dear parents and carers

Start of summer term letter.

I hope you had an enjoyable Easter and some opportunity to enjoy the better weather of late, which feels like it truly marks the start of our summer term. You will have seen my letter earlier this week regarding the very positive inspection report we have received this week. This has been achieved because of our collective efforts to ensure each child is able to succeed at school. Thank you.

I am hopeful that this term will feel like 'normal' for the first time in over a year. We will continue to be vigilant in school and ask for your continued support in beating the coronavirus by:

- Sending your child to school with a **clean mask** each day.
- Observing **social distancing** outside school and follow the Government guidance on meeting up.
- Complete and report the **home testing** for COVID each Sunday and Wednesday.

In school we are focusing on five key areas this term:

1. **Curriculum** - ensuring that what your child is taught and when it is taught is carefully planned taking account of the disruption during the pandemic but also clearly focused on their outcomes.
2. **Student learning** - ensuring that across all lessons, subjects and year groups there is a high level of consistency of their work, their behaviour and their engagement in their learning.
3. **Year 11 Grades** - ensuring that in the absence of national examinations there will be the best possible evidence to award a fair grade to each student in each subject by May half term.
4. **Attendance** - ensuring that we are working closely with you to do all we can to encourage high levels of attendance. Please see information regarding this appended to this letter.
5. **Detentions** - ensuring that for the small number where this is a necessary sanction in line with our behaviour policy that we carefully track the impact of this to improve their behaviour.

Joanne Shaw (Assistant Headteacher): Having spent the whole twenty-four years of her career to date at Lowton, Mrs Shaw has taken the decision to leave on Friday 30 April. As Mrs Shaw will be going through surgery in the near future, she now wants to give time and attention to this and her recovery.

Mrs Shaw has taught a wide range of subjects over time, led on curriculum, SEND, careers, alternative provision to name just a few. She leaves with our very best wishes for her future and thanks for her immense service to the school. She particularly wants to pass on her very best wishes to all students and parents.

CARING, LEARNING AND SUCCEEDING

Wiremu Kingi (School Chaplain): After more than three years with the school as our chaplain and in his dual role as Senior Youth Worker with Christ Church Pennington, Wiremu is returning with his wife to New Zealand. All those that know him know him for his calmness, his strong and visible Christian faith and his special ability to come alongside young people to encourage and strengthen them.

Wiremu's last day in school will be Tuesday 26 April, although his impact will be felt for the remainder of the term as he will continue to appear to students through recorded collective worship until July.

Key dates for the summer term:

Parents' Evenings:

Year 8 Parents' Evening: 11th May

Year 7 Parents' Evening: 21st June

Year 10 Parents' Evening: 8th July

Half Term:

May Day Bank Holiday: Monday 3rd May (School will be closed)

Half Term: School will close at the end of Friday 28th May and reopen Monday 7th June

As indicated in my letter of 18th December, school will close at 12.35 pm on Wednesday 21st July, not Tuesday 20th July as originally published.

Please remember that your first point of contact for your child is your child's form tutor in most cases. We want to continue to strengthen our close working with you to support and celebrate your child's success at school.

I will continue to write to you weekly this term and all these letters appear on our school website should you ever need to refer back to any content.

Yours faithfully,

Kieran Larkin
Headteacher

School Attendance – Covid-19 Update March 2021

Lowton Church of England High School is working in partnership with parents and Wigan Council to encourage children back into school following several very difficult months.

There have been two lockdown periods where the government made it clear that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school.

Now the circumstances have changed, it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development.

School attendance is therefore compulsory again from the beginning of Spring 2021.

This means from March 2021 the usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- parents' duty to send their child to school regularly where they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability of local authorities to use legal sanctions, including penalty notices and prosecution in court.

If you are worried about your child attending school the first port of call is to discuss your concerns with your child's form tutor. In addition, this is not the time to take your child out of school for a family holiday or other term time leave. It is unlikely that any leave will be authorised after so much enforced absence from school. No school or local authority wants to take legal action, and every attempt to resolve parents' concerns and improve a child's attendance will be made before any formal action is considered.

The Education Penalty Notice Warning below, clearly identifies parents' responsibilities in relation to absence from school and potential sanctions.

Education Penalty Notice Warning for Non-School Attendance

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school. If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12-week period:

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance
- 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

You could receive a Penalty Notice of £60 which will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution (a separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Wigan Council Attendance Service, in conjunction with schools, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child. If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties please contact your child's form tutor to ask for support.

Kieran Larkin
Headteacher