



9 December 2022

Dear families

As we move into the final week of term and look forward to some seasonal festivities such as the Carol Service at St Swithun's, Christmas lunches, celebration assemblies and our Christmas themed jumper day on Friday next week, I wanted to highlight a couple of important messages.

Toilets

Firstly, I understand there is concern from some students and families that we are not allowing students to use the toilets during lesson time. This is untrue. It is understandable that we would want to limit students leaving lessons for any reason, as this can disrupt the flow of learning for everyone in the class. Students are able to visit the toilet throughout the day at lesson changeovers and break/lunchtime, so we do ask that they refrain from going during the lesson, particularly during the first and last 10 minutes, where possible. That being said, we know there may on occasion be a need for a student to go during the lesson and others where we have been notified of a medical condition and a pass will be given.

Attendance and punctuality

Firstly, thank you to all of those families who have signed up for our new My Child at School App. I know that many of you have already used this to have discussions with your child about their attendance and punctuality and this is already having a positive effect.

We have noticed an increase in illness these past couple of weeks as might usually be the case with seasonal colds and flu. We are also aware that there is an increasing prevalence and concerns around Scarlet fever caused by Strep A. Please **see the attached letter with advice from West Sussex County Council**.

However, if your child is well enough to be in school, it is important that they continue to attend every day right up to and including the last day of term.

If your child's attendance has fallen below 95%, this can begin to have a noticeable impact on the progress they are making and their experience in school. They may begin to feel like they are having to catch-up on learning and are missing out on their social developments, friendships and opportunities, particularly if attendance falls below 90%, which the government terms 'persistent absenteeism' or a 'persistently absent pupil'.

Students should be in school every day and be in their form room by 8.25 am. Any medical appointments should take place out of school hours, where possible. We appreciate that we increasingly have less control over appointment times, but we ask you to take students out for as short a time as possible and if you cannot get an appointment out of school hours, then after 2.00pm would be preferable.

We know that national attendance to school for some young people post-Covid has been difficult and there are concerns nationally that levels of attendance have dipped quite significantly. We are finding similar patterns at Sackville for some of our students and are working hard with families to help establish reasons why they are not attending school every day. If you would like to discuss your child's attendance or punctuality, please make contact with their form tutor in the first instance or their year office.

Thank you as ever for your continued support.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jo Meloni".

Ms Jo Meloni
Headteacher