



Lucy Gambier
Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

I write my update this morning straight off the back of an incredible Year 11 Parents' Evening yesterday. This was the first in-person Parents' Evening for Year 11 families since 2019 and the sense of community was heartwarming. There were so many positive and constructive conversations throughout the three-hour event. The strength of our Parent-Student-Teacher relationships will certainly be further boosted by this experience, all for the benefit of our young adults who will be sitting their GCSEs in 2024. Thank you to all those who attended.

New Library Opens

We are delighted to announce that our new Penrice Library is now open! Located just behind Reception, the library has already been a hive of activity at breaktimes and lunchtimes with enthusiastic bookworms borrowing and returning their latest reads. (Pictures below).

Attendance

Now that Autumn has begun and the weather is changing, there are likely to be more colds, sniffles and illnesses going around. Between now and the end of term, we are going to focus heavily on attendance. Why? - Statistics show that if a child has excellent attendance throughout their school life, on average they will achieve one grade

higher in their GCSEs, across all curriculum areas, when compared to a student with an attendance figure of 90% or below.

We understand that it can be difficult for you to make judgements on whether your child is well enough to attend school or not when they show symptoms. It is for this reason that, in the below letter from Mr Foster, we have included a summary of NHS guidance for 10 common ailments that you can refer to when making decisions regarding your child's attendance. Please read the below information letter which contains useful reminders on the Penrice policy, UK law, and NHS school attendance guidance regarding various illnesses.

Attendance Letter (PDF: 245KB)

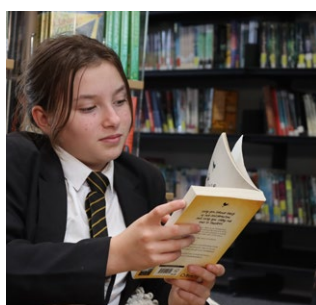


Alternatively, the full letter is also displayed towards the very end of this Parent Update.

Open Event on Tuesday

Looking ahead to next week, on Tuesday we open our doors to the wider community for our highly-anticipated Open Evening! We've already seen so many Penrice students across all year groups who have volunteered to help on the evening and this is greatly appreciated. Please do share the word with friends and family who may be interested in attending; you can direct them to our website for more information.

- Lucy Gambier



OPEN EVENT

Tuesday 3rd October



Find Your Future

Pride

Respect

Success

An Extraordinary Education

We look forward to hosting our next Open Event which will take place on the evening of Tuesday 3rd October 2023, 4:30pm until 7:30pm.

Come and see what makes Penrice Academy extraordinary!

EARLY CLOSURE REMINDER FOR TUESDAY

A reminder that the school day will finish at 1pm on Tuesday 3rd October allowing subject departments, our Student Leaders and student representatives to prepare for the Open Evening which begins at 4:30pm. A letter was previously sent out with further details of arrangements.

In addition, due to our Open Evening on Tuesday 3rd October, there will be no Penrice Plus clubs running on this day. Other days of the week are unaffected.

Safeguarding Update

At Penrice we are strong advocates of promoting healthy online use and the importance of monitoring mobile phone usage to protect young people from potential harm.

We are planning classroom and home-use recourses with a focus on online platforms and their use which will also include parental

information evenings throughout the year to support and promote online safety.

We wanted to share with you a recent development in the Online Safety Bill which has now been passed through The House of Lords and Parliament on the 21st of September 2023.

Information on the New Online Safety Bill ([.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))



Pride

Respect

Success



HOMework CLUB

Mondays – Thursdays after school, 3pm – 4pm

Homework Club is available after school to support students with their independent learning. It is available from Monday – Thursday after school, 3pm – 4pm in CS3.

Students do not have to sign up to attend, they can just drop in and leave once they have finished their homework.

Students are also able to use computer room CS4 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at Break 1. There will be members of our Year 11 Student Leadership Team in attendance at Homework Club to offer support and guidance.

The skill of independent learning is the foundation of our students' success and we look forward to seeing many students taking advantage of our Homework Club provision.





Mr James Hammersley
Assistant Headteacher - Careers and Aspiration

Work Experience 2024

The Work Experience 2024 process begins for Year 10 on Monday 2nd October. This is the time for our students to set themselves up for a fantastic week in July (22nd-26th). We encourage all students to choose opportunities that will inspire them and provide an enjoyable and fascinating time in a workplace.

The application process is fully electronic this year.

Year 10 students will learn how to use the Vervan system - an online database of employers and workplaces in Cornwall who offer work experience. Students are also encouraged to use their own friends and family networks to find amazing placements, these can be both in and beyond Cornwall, however we recommend that students do not work directly with parents.

Once students have chosen employers (they will apply for 3 placements), we will lead them through writing letters of application and completion of the Application and Consent forms. Cornwall Council provide the safeguarding and legal checks to verify the placement.

We will release video content next week giving parents more information about the application process and how they can support their children in finding the best placements.

In the meantime, please talk to your child about the world of work and what they would like to do for their Work Experience.

WORK EXPERIENCE CAN YOU HELP?



If any parent/carer is keen to support our students and offer a work experience opportunity for our Year 10's, please email enquiries@penrice.org.uk and we will be in touch.

Placement dates:
Monday 22nd July to Friday 26th July 2024



YEAR 7 UPDATE FROM MR DARBOURNE

Dear Year 7 Parents,

I hope this message finds you well. It has been a busy four weeks here but your children have truly made an exceptional start to Year 7 at Penrice Academy. They have embraced this new chapter with consistency and adaptability that is truly commendable.

From day one, it has been a pleasure to witness their commitment to learning and their ability to adapt to their new school environment. They've settled in remarkably well, forming friendships, engaging in different opportunities, and showing great enthusiasm for their studies.

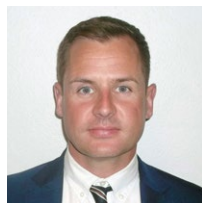
Their consistent efforts and adaptability are a testament to their resilience and

determination. As parents, your support and guidance have undoubtedly played a significant role in their success so far.

Let's celebrate this fantastic beginning together and look forward to a year filled with growth and achievements for your wonderful children.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to support both you and your child throughout this journey.





Mr Carl Foster
Deputy Headteacher - Behaviour and Attendance

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Penrice Academy, we recognise that excellent attendance is crucially important to our students and we categorise this as achieving an attendance figure of 96% and above. Statistics show that if a child has excellent attendance throughout their school life, on average they will achieve one grade higher in their GCSEs, across all curriculum areas, when compared to a student with an attendance figure of 90% or below. This is the reason why we value attendance so highly - we believe that offering students the opportunities to succeed will enable them to reach their full potential and lead to improved life chances.

To encourage students to be in school every day, we will be promoting excellent attendance through the following:

- Reward trips for the best attending tutor groups are given out termly at celebration assemblies in Year 7 and 8.
- Reward trips for the 30 best attenders on a termly basis are given out at celebration assemblies in Year 9, 10 and 11.
- Students with over 96% attendance receive termly certificates.
- Awarding merits for 100% attendance each week.

School Absence and The Law

As we venture further into the Autumn term, the usual coughs, colds and other minor ailments start to appear. I thought it would be useful to inform you of the school's policy when reporting illness, how punctuality can affect attendance and the legal requirements that the school has to uphold in relation to attendance. Also, I

have included some useful NHS guidance for school absence due to illness.

Absence from School

If your child is absent from school, you must contact the school with a reason for the absence. This can be via email at attendance@penrice.org.uk or by telephoning 01726 72163 (option 1). If we do not receive any verbal or written communication from you, then the Admissions and Attendance Officer, or a member of the Pastoral Team, will telephone home. Failure to respond may result in a home visit being conducted. If there is no response to this home visit, your child may be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education. Contact may also be made with Children's Services and/or the Police – in line with safeguarding procedures. Additionally, please be aware that the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

When advising the school of the reason for your child's absence, please can we ask you to be specific with the reason given. If your child is absent from school for a prolonged period due to illness, we may request medical evidence to authorise this absence.

Requests for Absence

All requests for absence should be made formally to the Headteacher, at least 15 days in advance, using the Request for Absence Form - this can be found on the school's [website here](#) or can be found within the attendance policy ([pages 23 & 24 here](#)).

Once completed, this form can either be emailed to attendance@penrice.org.uk or

passed directly to our Admissions and Attendance Officer. It is important that you provide the school with full details of the reason for requesting the absence.

I would like to remind you that a planned absence from school will only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances'. This will be at the Headteacher's discretion and only if they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist.

Please note: Penrice Academy will make referrals to Cornwall Council for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where holidays are taken within term-time.

The Law States:

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a penalty notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A of the said Act.

Penalty notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.

Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to court. 'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents whether they are married or not; any person or body who

has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and; any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

Punctuality

To ensure that all students arrive promptly for an 8.30am start, the school gate is closed at 8.28am each morning. All students who arrive between 8.28am and 8.45am, must sign in when they arrive and their attendance will be coded as 'L' (Late).

The appropriate sanction will be issued. If a student is significantly late (after 8.45am), they must enter via Reception - their attendance will be coded as 'U' (Unauthorised), which affects attendance negatively, and the appropriate sanction will be issued.

Discussing Attendance

Finally, if you would like to discuss any issues your child may be experiencing, which are preventing them from attending school, please contact the school as soon as possible and speak to either your child's Head of Year or Pastoral Support Mentor.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mr C Foster

Deputy Headteacher

NHS Guidance for Absence Due to Illness

Coughs and colds (Including a runny nose)	There is no need for your child to remain at home if they have a minor cough or common cold. However, if they have a fever they should be kept off until their temperature returns to normal.
Cold Sores	There is no need to keep your child off school if they have a cold sore.
Head lice and nits	There is no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice or nits.
Sore throat	You can still send your child to school if they have a sore throat, unless it is accompanied by a high fever.
Vomiting and diarrhoea	If your child has severe vomiting and diarrhoea please seek medical advice. If the advice is for your child to remain at home, please provide this evidence on their return.
General illness	Children should attend school once they feel better. If they are unwell in the morning, but better by the afternoon, they can return. If you feel this could be anxiety related, please seek advice from school as we can support with this, rather than keep them at home.
Minor headache	A child with a minor headache doesn't need to be kept off school. If the headache is more severe, a GP should be consulted.
COVID (It is not recommended that children are tested for COVID 19, unless directed by a health professional)	If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school. Your child should try to avoid contact with other people if they have symptoms of covid 19 with a high temperature and do not feel well enough to do their normal activities.
Chickenpox	If your child has chickenpox, keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appear.
Conjunctivitis	You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have conjunctivitis. Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash hands regularly.

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SOCIAL MEDIA & MENTAL HEALTH

An estimated one-third of children have a social media account, so it's important that trusted adults know what content young people are consuming, what they're posting and the interactions they're having. On social media, it can be easy to go down 'rabbit holes' that aren't beneficial to our wellbeing. As platforms grapple with managing such 'legal but harmful' content, lives are being impacted – sometimes to tragic effect. We might be daunted by the scale of the tech giants and their content which so enthralls young people, but we can still help children to be aware of their mental wellness: recognising when something isn't OK... and knowing what to do about content that upsets them.

1. UNDERSTAND THE ALGORITHM

Algorithms rank content by user interest: someone who regularly interacts with sports news, say, will see the latest results at the top of their feed. Likewise, if a user browses content that can cause harm, that's what will be recommended to them in future. Someone who's had a bad day and looks for posts which reflect their mood will find similar content being suggested to them more and more.

2. AVOID THE MAIN FEEDS

Avoiding the default feeds on social media platforms limits the amount of recommended content that's shown. Users can opt to only scroll through the accounts they follow, use restricted modes, or highlight posts that they don't want to see more of. Explore the platform safety settings to see how you can take control of what your child's phone shows them when they open the app.

3. DISCUSS WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Chatting about what your child's seen online keeps you aware of the content they're interacting with. Don't assume that platforms are screening out inappropriate material, or even that your child would recognise content as being harmful. Discuss who they follow, what posts they like and what comes up in their feeds: if alarm bells ring, it could be time for a more in-depth talk or to seek support.

4. LEARN HOW TO HIDE CONTENT

If your child stumbles across unsuitable content on social media, there's the option to hide that post as well as indicating you'd prefer any similar material not to be suggested in future. On some platforms, you might also be able to block posts that contain specific words, which is an excellent way to start taking control of what your child sees online.

5. SET DAILY LIMITS

Phones and most apps can tell you how much they're being used. Spending too long online can mean a child misses out on other activities that are important to all-round wellbeing. You could set some family rules – for everyone to follow – around device use, such as screen time limits and tech-free spaces: involving your child in creating this agreement makes them more likely to stick to it.

6. MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITY

Keeping a discreet eye on how your child is using social media can help ensure they're not entering potentially dangerous situations. As they grow up, of course, children need space to exercise their independence – but you can still occasionally ask to see what they're looking at. Be transparent about your own social media use and try not to sound judgemental about your child's.

7. TURN OFF PUSH NOTIFICATIONS

Even for adults, it's tempting to check an email or message as soon as the alert sound pings. Push notifications encourage people to open their apps and spend time on their device, so turning them off will help your child to practise mindful use of tech. Most of us have other things that we need to focus on as a priority – and those notifications will still be there later, when we have more time.

8. USE DEVICES TOGETHER

Giving children internet-enabled devices and complete freedom to explore platforms on their own can result in exposure to hugely damaging content. You could consider making a particular area at home a designated space to use phones, tablets and so on – making it much easier to monitor what content your child is viewing and (if necessary) steer them away from any potentially harmful paths.

9. ENCOURAGE OTHER ACTIVITIES

Mental health professionals often highlight the importance of exercise, quality time with loved ones, a balanced diet and restful sleep for our mental wellbeing. Spending hours on social media can cause us to sacrifice other activities that our brains need to feel well – so encouraging your child to put down their phone and enjoy something that doesn't involve a screen can be immensely beneficial.

10. TALK ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

Most platforms default children's accounts to private, so only people they've accepted as friends can see their posts. This reduces the risk of bullying or unkind comments, but – just like offline life – the digital world can still make children feel as if they need to act or look a certain way to fit in. Talk to your child about peer pressure, and listen to any concerns so you can provide the support they need.

Meet Our Expert

Shazia Sarwar-Azim is executive headteacher at a specialist primary school and, as an emotional therapy coach, works with school leaders to focus on the SEND, mental health and wellbeing agenda. A passionate advocate for vulnerable learners, Shazia is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and the author of *The Rainbow Within*, a book which supports children with SEMH needs.



Sources: <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-63204605>
<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-algorithms/>

NOS
National Online Safety
#WakeUpWednesday