

1 September 2023



Dear Parents, Carers and Students

We are very pleased to be welcoming our students back to school on Tuesday 5 September, after the summer break. Whilst there are changes and updates to a number of things, some regular administration and paperwork remains the same and we must ensure that both are taken care of.

On their first or second day, students will be given some items to take home for their parents or carers.

**All students** will bring home a data checking sheet in a named envelope for the annual return. Because the data sheets were generated before the start of the new academic year, the sheets for Year 8 - 13 show the tutor groups as they were last year. Please don't think that we have your child registered in the wrong year group!

**Please complete and return your data checking sheet by Monday 11 September.** They can be returned by students to their tutors or directly to the reception office.

**Year 7** students will bring home a locker request form. If students in other year groups would like to request a locker, they can collect a request form from the reception office. These fully completed forms need to be returned directly to our Finance Office (not to tutors or reception), along with the deposit / rental money.

### Student Support

Tutors remain the first and main point of contact for every student and their parents / carers. Our Student Support team will continue to provide additional support and our dedicated Attendance Team looks after attendance/absence. Contact details for tutors are on our website: [The Spires College - Tutors and Student Support](#). Contact details for reporting absence and further information about attendance is also on the website: [The Spires College - Report a Student Absence](#)

### Torbay's Attendance Letter

Accompanying this letter is a letter from Torbay Council's Attendance Improvement Team, with important details about School Attendance in Torbay and action that can be taken if attendance at school becomes an issue. This letter is for your information and an up to date version is shared annually with every family with school aged children in Torbay. Please do ensure that you read it so that you are fully informed.

### Information Booklet

The information booklet that contains useful information about being a student (and parent / carer of students) at the college has been updated. This booklet is always available on the college website and we urge all parents/carers and students to read the updated version: [The Spires College - Student and Parent information booklet](#)

A printed booklet can be collected from our reception office, if you prefer.

## **Behaviour Policy**

The behaviour policy is always available on the college website: [The Spires College - Behaviour and Anti-Bullying](#). Please re-familiarise yourself with the college expectations that were explained as part of the transition process for every student when they joined the college and are detailed in this policy. The behaviour policy also includes the conduct of visitors, parents/carers and family members. It is with regret that attention has to be drawn to this part of the policy. Paper copies of all policies are available upon request to our reception office.

## **Communication**

To ensure that you receive emails from the college, please save the following email address as a contact: [SC8804117a@schoolcomms.com](mailto:SC8804117a@schoolcomms.com). This should prevent your email provider from identifying messages from the college as junk or spam.

## **Class Charts App**

Please ensure that you are registered with Class Charts. This is the way in which day to day information, including positive and negative behaviour (merits and de-merits, rewards, detentions, confiscations, etc.), homework and other information is shared with parents and carers so it is very important that parents and carers set up an account. Students have their own accounts that are set up in school. More information about Class Charts is on our website: [The Spires College - Class Charts](#)

If you have a query about Class Charts that is not answered in the guide on our website, please contact Nathan Moore by emailing [nmoore@thespirescollege.com](mailto:nmoore@thespirescollege.com).

## **Parking and Vehicular Access to the College**

Please remember that there is no vehicular access to the college. The car-parking areas are for staff only as we do not have room for visitor parking. There are no safe places for vehicles to park or wait close to the school site and so we ask that, if students are being dropped to or collected from school by vehicle, arrangements are made for this to happen further away in neighbouring roads (with consideration for residents and other road users) and not in the access lanes close to the school. These areas quickly and easily become hazardous, particularly to pedestrians. Please help us to keep our community safe. Please also be reminded that the car-park at Swim Torquay is pay on entry with a vehicle registration recognition system.

## **Lost Property**

At the end of each half term, students and parents/carers have the opportunity to view and claim un-named items of lost property before they are donated to charity or disposed of. The college is not responsible for any items brought on site but we endeavour to reunite lost and found items with their owner. All found items that are marked with the owner's name are returned to them so please ensure that your child's name is clearly marked on all uniform, PE Kit and other items that they bring into school. More information about how we process lost property is on the college website: [The Spires College - Lost Property](#)

Thank you for your support with these administrative tasks.

Yours sincerely



## **The Administration Team**

The letter from Torbay Council regarding Attendance is on the following page.

First shared with all parents and carers 4 September 2023

Dear Parent / Carer

Each year the Local Authority is expected to communicate with all parents of children attending a school in Torbay, to remind you of Torbay Council's policy in relation to school attendance. **This letter is not a concern about YOUR child's attendance.** We are encouraged to send it, so all parents and carers understand the framework. **This letter is sent out by your child's school on our behalf.** If your child's school have concern about your child's attendance, they will contact you directly.

Over the last year, the majority of families have ensured that their child attended school regularly and enjoyed the benefits of being on roll at one of Torbay's schools. If your child has no unauthorised absences, I would like to thank you for your continuing commitment to your child's education. However, we all need to continue to work together to make sure that all children attend school as much as possible so that any gaps in their learning can be quickly and efficiently filled. I would urge you to communicate with your child's school should there be any problems with your child's attendance. As soon as a problem with your child's attendance is identified, the sooner the parents and schools can work together to overcome the barriers for your child.

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child who is of compulsory school age receives an efficient, full-time education. Therefore, if your child has no unauthorised absences and their attendance is at 96% or above, you are giving your child the best chance to achieve their potential. If parents/carers fail to ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance at school, they are committing an offence, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

We acknowledge that some absence, e.g., illness, is unavoidable. However, any requests for avoidable absences from school (including holidays) can only be agreed by the school in advance, so it is therefore essential that you apply to the school in writing as far in advance of the absence as is reasonably possible using a form supplied by the school. Please be aware that a school can only grant leave in exceptional circumstances. The Department for Education guidance states that "leave is unlikely to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm."

**In situations where a child accumulates 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences (one school day is made up of two sessions) within any six-month period, parents/carers will make themselves liable to receiving a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child. If a Penalty Notice is issued it carries a penalty of £60 if paid in full within 21 days or £120 if paid in full after this time but within 28 days. Part or late payments cannot be accepted and there is no legal right to appeal the Penalty Notice once it has been issued. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid, this is likely to result in Court proceedings being instigated for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance contrary to section 444 Education Act 1996. Upon conviction of such an offence the maximum fine of £2500, or a maximum 3 months imprisonment, can be imposed.**

**Please note: only one Penalty Notice will be issued in any two-year period. This means that if a Penalty Notice is paid, and the child accumulates a further 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within the following two years, this will result in the parent/carer receiving a summons to Court for an offence contrary to s444 Education Act.**

If you are considering taking your child out of school, you are reminded to read both your child's School Attendance Policy (normally on the school website) regarding avoidable absence in term time and the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct which can be accessed at: [www.torbay.gov.uk/attendance](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/attendance).

Yours sincerely,



On Behalf of the Attendance Improvement Service