

## **Attendance**

We believe that good attendance is not simply a legal requirement but essential. Through regular attendance children can take full advantage of all that school offers and gain the educational and social skills necessary for life. Good attendance at school is important for children's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. It is essential that the school is informed of the reasons for absence. Under current government legislation, unauthorised absence is regarded as truancy; all absence figures have to be reported to the council and the Department for Education and are recorded on a child's annual report. It is also important that your child arrives on time for school, as the start of the day establishes the learning activities for the day. Lateness is recorded in the register. We are legally bound to register a pupil's attendance at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

Registers are closed at 9.05 am and any child arriving after this time is marked with an unauthorised absence for the morning session. Children arriving late will receive a text to let parents know (as they may be unaware) and to indicate how much learning time has been lost.

### **What parents/carers are responsible for:**

- Making sure your child comes to school on time every day to enable them to receive their entitlement to learn, unless prevented by illness or medical appointment
- Letting the school know as soon as possible why a child is away
- Sending in a note for absence on return
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with

### **Why is attendance so important**

- School attendance has a direct affect on a child's educational outcomes and is important for your child's future
- School attendance enables children to access all available opportunities and reach their full potential
- Children with poor attendance tend to achieve much less than those who attend regularly
- We contact parents termly when attendance falls below 90%
- We would reasonably expect attendance to be 95%+ unless there is an ongoing medical need

### **How many children achieve 95% - 100% attendance**

- A number of children in any class in any term will achieve 100 per cent attendance and nearly all children in that class will have been to school for over 95% of their time
- Only a few children attend less than 95% of their time

### **The school says that my child's average for the term is 90 per cent - should I be concerned?**

- Yes, as this means your child is having on average a day off every other week

- This may be because they had the odd day here and there and then a few days off for an illness. Over the term it adds up
- Your child's attainment could be seriously affected by a low level of attendance and the school may contact you to discuss the matter

### **What could I do to help minimise my child's time off school?**

- One of the best ways to help your child is to make all doctors', dentists', opticians' and other appointments for after school hours
- Make sure your child is never late for school (doors open at 8.40 am)
- You should contact your child's school to discuss this matter. Speak to the class teacher, Headteacher (Mr Flemington) or Parent Support Advisor (Mrs Norma Hallett)

### **The school wasn't happy when I asked whether my child could take a little bit of time off for a family holiday. My child never has any other time off.**

- If your child has a week off school they could lose up to 20 lessons of English and mathematics depending on how the school organises its lessons
- If you feel there are exceptional circumstances for a period of absence you have to get permission from the Headteacher at the school, or the child will be marked as having unauthorised absence
- A family holiday may not be considered as exceptional unless there are other circumstance which mean it has to happen during the school term
- It is the Headteacher who must decide whether the any circumstances are exceptional

### **Non-School Attendance**

You have a legal responsibility to make sure your children get a suitable education (as set out in the [Education Act 1996](#)). For the majority, this means making sure your child is registered at a school and that they attend regularly during term time. If your child fails to attend school regularly you are committing an offence and could be issued with a Penalty Notice or prosecuted, which could result in a fine of up to £2500 or imprisonment for failing to ensure your child regularly attends school. Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which would mean you having to attend parenting classes. The Local Authority can also apply for an Education Supervision Order.

### **Leave of absence**

You do not have a legal right to take your children out of school. It is always the Headteacher's decision whether or not to allow you to take your child out of school during term time. If you do not ask their permission in advance, or they do not give it and you take your child out of school anyway, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Headteacher's may authorise an absence from school during term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include

- the death or terminal illness of a person in the immediate family
- service personnel and other employees who cannot take leave outside term time at any point in the academic year.

Family holidays are not generally considered to be an exceptional circumstance. You must make any requests for leave of absence in advance and you must be the parent the child normally lives

with. It is important to give the Headteacher as much information as possible when applying for a leave of absence.

### **Penalty Notices**

A penalty notice is an alternative to you being taken to court by the local authority. If your child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence, the school will inform our Education Welfare Service who may issue a penalty notice for each child to each parent. Anyone who has day to day care of a child is considered a 'parent' and legally responsible for making sure the child attends school, this could be a step parent or a parent not living at the child's home address.

What is the cost?

- The penalty is £120 per child per parent if paid within 28 days. The penalty is reduced to £60 per child per parent if paid within the first 21 days
- If you do not pay the fine within 28 days we have no option but to prosecute you in the Magistrates' Court. This could lead to a fine of up to £,1000 per parent per child

### **Enquiries and advice**

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, you should first talk to your child's school.

Alternatively you can contact the Education Welfare Service on 01225 718230