

8th November 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

As you will be aware good school attendance is essential for our pupils to achieve their potential. At present, a pupil is considered to be a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance falls below 90%.

We do understand that some absences are unavoidable, particularly those due to illness and/or medical conditions. However, I have been receiving an increasing number of requests to authorise absence for holidays. Government Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore I thought it would be useful to clarify our position;

- 1. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they are 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short'**
2. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Attendance is a priority and as such absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances
3. The decision to authorise a pupil's absence will be based on the assessment and merits of each request
4. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event – holidays are therefore not considered 'exceptional circumstances'
5. Absences to visit seriously-ill relatives or for a bereavement of a close family member are usually considered to amount to 'exceptional circumstances', but for the funeral service and travelling time only, not for extended leave
6. Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account, but only for the ceremony and travelling time, again, not for extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events
7. School may take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time
8. School has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
9. Families may need time together to recover from a trauma or crisis
10. A pupil's record of attendance will be taken into account when making absence-related decisions
11. It is important to note that the head teacher can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether a particular absence is authorized
12. Absences will not be authorised for pupils in Statutory Assessment year groups.

On the reverse of this letter you will find further information about the importance of good school attendance. I hope you find this information useful. Thanks for your support and understanding in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Hoyle
Headteacher

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Some information about school attendance

- Good attendance at school is the single most important factor to ensure that young people have the maximum life chances - attendance is strongly linked to educational achievement. Promoting positive school attendance is everyone's responsibility.
- Pupils who miss school risk failing to achieve what they are capable of
- Figures have shown that 90% of persistent, poor or non-attenders fail to achieve five or more good grades at GCSE and approximately one third achieve no GCSEs at all
- When pupils miss school ... they miss out!
- Good attendance is important in order for children to: - Achieve their potential. - Develop a positive attitude towards school and good habits of punctuality and attendance. - See themselves as an important part of the school community and to value and respect school life
- It is a legal obligation of all parents/carers to ensure their child attends school regularly. By law all children of compulsory school age (5–17) must get a proper full time education
- Parents are responsible for ensuring children attend school regularly in a condition to learn
- Children should be at school by 9.00am each morning

What does 90% Attendance Mean?

- 90% attendance = ½ day missed every week. Over one school year this is 4 weeks of learning lost!
- Over the 5 school years you will have missed half a year!
- 8 days absence = 96%
- 19 days absence = 90%

Punctuality matters too!

Missed minutes = missed learning = missed opportunities. Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

We monitor everyone's attendance every half term and highlight pupils for improvement.

We will continue to support families in any way we can to maintain a good level of attendance.

We understand that children are sometimes unable to attend school for a range of reasons and ask that you contact school as soon as possible to let us know.

THANK YOU!