



Colvestone Attendance &

Attendance & Punctuality Policy Reviews (Version Control)

| Review Date | Changes made/Details of action plan | Next Review Due Date | By Whom |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| | First Published Version | October 2023 | Ms Jenni Bird Mr Warren Miss Anna Lucey |

Aims

Colvestone work with parents and children to ensure that children are in school at all times. We provide an environment which enables and encourages all members of our community to have high expectations for all our children. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and all children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

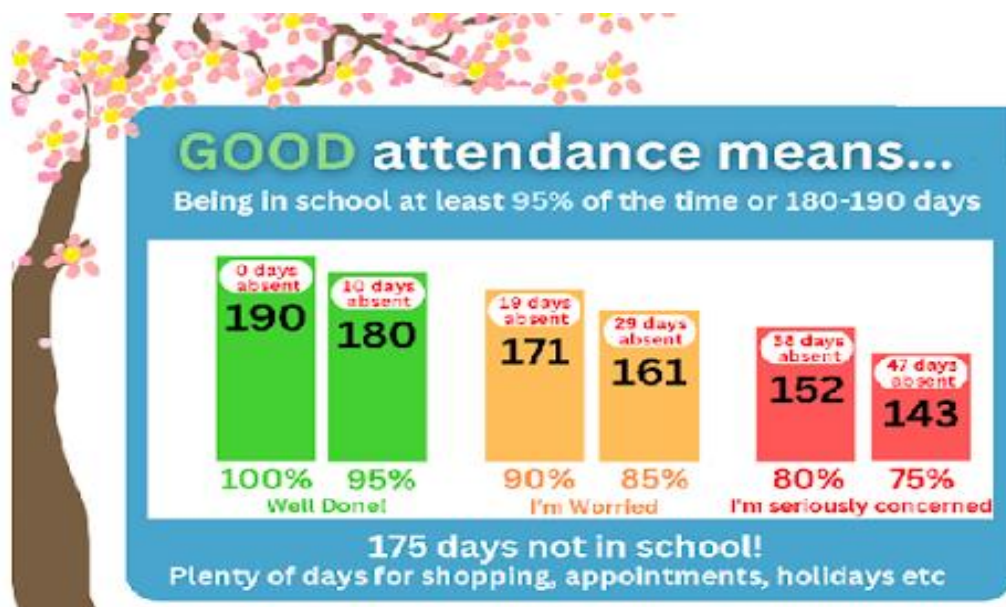
It is very important therefore that parents make sure that their children attend regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

We aim:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child develops and achieves, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.

- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.



Why Regular Attendance is so important

Learning: Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class. It is the parents' legal responsibility to ensure that their child/ren attend school regularly and parents permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding: Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of a school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for each child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti- bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality

Legal obligations:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register.

- The School to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school.
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded and classified (**not by the parents**), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings, afternoons or full days away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to Blossom federation using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after 9.30am)
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time.
- Attendance falling under 90% and no medical proof provided.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, this should not be condoned by the parent by giving an excuse for the child's absence. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and does not resolve the underlying reason.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All PA pupils and their parents are subject to an attendance contract (see appendix 1). The plan may include: allocation of additional support, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent the parent must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;

- Provide proof of medical or other appointment;

If a child is absent we will:

- Telephone the parent on the first day of absence, if we have not heard from them;
- Invite the parent into school to discuss the situation with a member of the attendance team and if absences are persistent the Pastoral Care Manager.

Telephone numbers

Parents must provide the school with an up-to-date contact number. They must also provide an alternative number in case the school cannot contact the parent on the number given. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Deputy Headteacher

Parents are expected to contact school on the first day of absence and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is usually successful. However, if difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Federation Pastoral Care Manager. He/she will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, we can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is unacceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Pupils arriving late in class disrupt lessons, and they may feel embarrassed and anxious. Parents should notify the school if their child is going to be late and give the reason.

Blossom Federation

Getting your child to school really matters. Did you know...

| If in a school year, your child is late every day by... | Your child would have lost approximately... | or they would have missed approximately... |
|---|---|--|
| 5 Minutes | 3.5 Days from School | 20 Lessons |
| 10 Minutes | 7 Days from School | 41 Lessons |
| 15 Minutes | 10 Days from School | 55 Lessons |
| 20 Minutes | 14.5 Days from School | 82 Lessons |
| 30 Minutes | 22 Days from School | 123 Lessons |

You should *not* take your child on holiday during term time. please encourage punctuality to maintain school attendance.

Encouraging Punctuality

Study Start

We encourage children to arrive from 8.45am to take advantage of Study Start. They are expected to walk sensibly to their classrooms once the bell has been rung. A member of staff will be ready for children in every classroom from 8.45 until the class teachers take the register.

Study start sessions consist of short engaging activities which consolidate prior learning or develop thinking skills. These help children to settle and prepare for their day's learning.

Registers are marked by **9.05am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with our Pastoral Team or Attendance Lead to resolve the problem, parents are encouraged to approach the school if they are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Flexi Schooling

Is an arrangement between the parent and the school where the child is registered at school and attends the school only part of the time; the rest of the time the child is home educated.

The parent must complete a request for leave form for the Head of school to consider.

Responsibility for Attendance & Punctuality

Executive Head Teacher and Head of School

- Responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- Deals with parental requests for extended leave in line with Hackney Local Authority policies and procedures.
- Considers the use of Penalty Notices, in line with Hackney Authority policies and procedures.

Deputy Head Teacher and Office

- Leads on and takes responsibility for attendance & punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with and responding to parents.
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for HT/SMT/SLT/Governors to analyse.
- Meets with the School Attendance lead in each school to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.

- To report to the Local Authority, as requested.
- Conduct home visits and complete missing pupil referrals.
- To report children to Elective home education, if requested.
- Conduct home visits for mid-term admissions with attendance issues.
- Ensures that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.
- Uphold and enforce the law in respect of attendance, child employment, and involvement in entertainment and child protection & safeguarding.
- Issue penalty warnings and fines when directed by the Executive Head teacher.

School

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child does not arrive at school and no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data for year groups.
- To check the school's answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the Deputy Head if there are any concerns relating to attendance or punctuality.
- To record reasons for absence and update class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of SIMs registers after the morning registration sessions.
- To contact parents/carers following 2 instances of lateness or absence within any given week.
- To maintain the School's attendance records in line with this policy.
- To report attendance concerns to Deputy Head.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality for each year group.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- To reinforce school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school of pupil's absence.
- Ensure that parents are informed of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To report a child missing to the Deputy Head if no contact is made on the second day.
- To follow the missing child procedure.
- To inform parents of their child's attendance when making calls and make them aware of expectations.
- To make appointments with parents when there is an attendance concern.

Teachers

- To ensure quality teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the SIMS register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's SIMS system at 9.00 am and by 2.00 pm (as soon as children return to class in the afternoon).
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are known.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.

- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.
- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the Deputy Head of pupils who may have gone on holiday or moved.
- Inform parents to complete a leave application or change of address form if they become aware of any changes.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality during parents' meetings.

Parents

Children should only be kept at home, if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach-aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them into school. If the child does not improve, the school will contact parents straight away, to collect them. If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know and produce evidence. Pupils' should be brought back to school after appointments or attend school before appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.

- Arrange medical and dental appointments out of school time whenever possible.
- Telephone the school on the first day of absence for their child and give reason for absence.
- Provide proof of appointments as soon as they are aware of them.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

Strategies for promoting excellent attendance

To ensure good attendance and punctuality is above 97% the schools will regularly promote and support attendance and punctuality.

Weekly Celebration Assemblies

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality and the number of pupils achieving 97% - 100% attendance are shared in weekly assemblies. This develops healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance. It also engages the class teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

School Attendance Celebration Board

These boards include attendance information and information about the classes with the highest attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Matters – Parent Guide on our website

Details of how parents can support the school by improving their child's attendance and punctuality. These can be found on the schools' websites.

Breakfast Club

Daily Breakfast Club is available in all three schools. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 8.00am ensuring they are on time for school. The club is supervised by members of the school's staff. This may be offered to parents of children that are regularly late and may need support to get their child/ren into school.

The School Learning Environment

A welcoming, organised learning environment that supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the SLT to support teachers to improve the classroom environment where needed.

Staff Promoting Good Attendance

It is important that teachers and support staff build good relationships with the children in their class. They should regularly promote good attendance and punctuality in their classes ensuring that children feel welcomed to class even if they are late. Good class attendance is attributed to engaging and challenging teaching.

End of Term/Year Attendance Rewards

Children with 100% attendance, for that term, receive a special attendance certificate, signed by the Head of School to take home and keep. Certificates are presented each term.

Mr Warren will send a letter to parents of children achieving 97%+ attendance at the end of each half term.

Parent Evenings/School Reports

This provides an opportunity for class teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance.

Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using SIMS. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session. The teacher taking the class for the morning or afternoon session has overall responsibility for the completion of the register. Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

Morning Register

Class registers remain open until 9:05am. At that point, the teacher must save their final register and close down SIMS. The teacher may save the register as many times as they wish before 9.00 am (e.g. if

a mistake has been made or a child has arrived slightly late) but at 9.05 am the register must be correct and saved. By 9am the gates are locked. Children arriving after this time will enter via the main office. A member of the OFFICE will record the children on SIMS as arriving late.

This is to ensure that no children are missed on the register due to arriving in school late. The office deal with late arrivals until 9:30am, at which point the receptionist takes over. Children arriving after 9:30am are recorded as 'U' (late after register closed) in the register. The office then checks that the children who have arrived late have been marked in the registers and corrects any mistakes or inputs codes for children who are known to be absent. The attendance person will then begin first day absence calls.

Afternoon Register

Registers must be submitted by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence.

School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about attendance and punctuality.

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| Letter One | Sent to parents whose children have attendance below 97% - 100% To celebrate your child having great attendance. |
| Letter Two | Sent to parents whose children have attendance below 95% Sent to parents whose children have received 6 late marks in a half term. Phone call from School attendance team. To let you know your child's attendance is dropping close to being a concern. |
| Letter Three | Sent to parents whose children have attendance below 92% Sent to parents whose children continue to be late to school. Invite you in for Attendance surgery. Attendance is a significant concern, please talk to us to see if we can help. |
| Letter Four | Sent to children whose children have attendance below 90% Attendance meeting at School, Attendance contract and review meetings agreed.. If a child has accumulated 10 unauthorised absences by this point. The school will issue a Penalty warning notification. Your child is now considered to be persistently absent from school: we need to be in communication to discuss a plan of action for improving attendance. |

Punctuality Folder

The office team monitors the punctuality folder regularly. This may involve speaking to parents directly, or via a phone call. Letters regarding the school's concern over lateness may also be sent; explaining how much learning pupils are missing. If it does not improve, parents are invited in to school, to discuss the concerns with the attendance team and plan a way forward. If lateness does not improve following the meeting, then the family will be referred to the Deputy Head Teacher.

IMPORTANT: Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made.

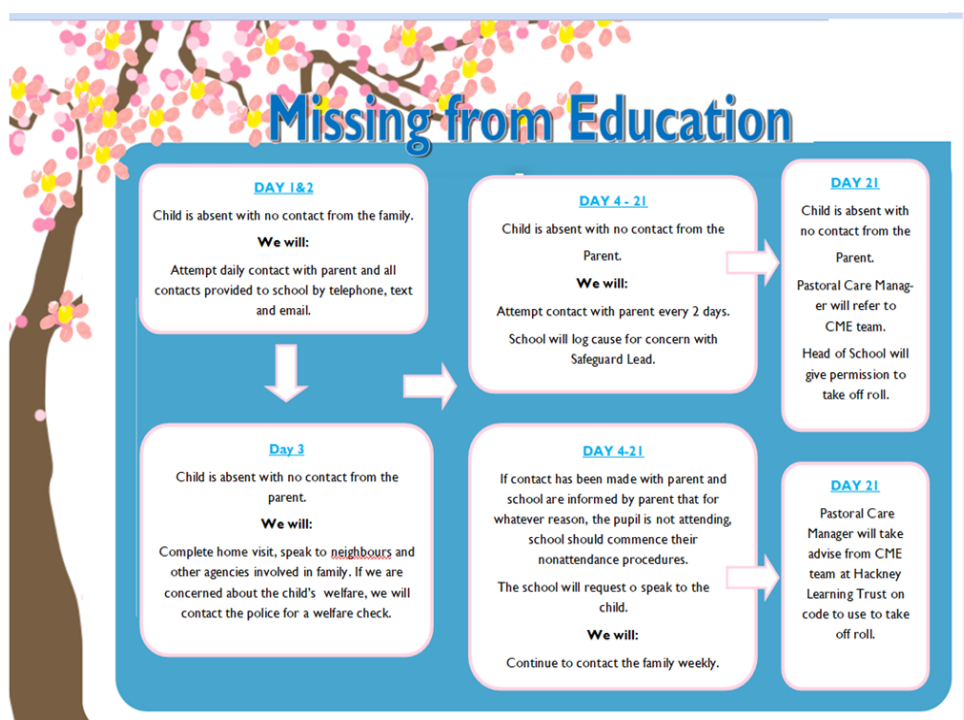
The schools will follow this system:

- Phone parents' contact number(s).
- Repeats this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
- Attendance office staff speaks to the parents at home time, if they are at school to pick up other children.
- Speak to the parents face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update contact numbers.

The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name on SIMS. The school must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code. If the staff member has not been able to contact parents after 2 days then the absence is recorded as 'O' (unauthorised) and a home visit completed. At this point the child is considered Missing from Education.

Missing in Education

A Child Missing from Education (CME) is defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as "a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more)." We will take the following steps to locate a child.



Attendance Meetings

The Deputy Head monitors individuals, classes, year groups, different ethnic groups, SEN, and FSM pupils. They identify patterns and trends in absence and/or punctuality, including persistent absence. The systems and structures are then followed, to improve attendance for these individuals or groups. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 95% and parents who are concerned about their child's attendance, are invited to work in partnership with the school. (See attendance record sheet)

Summary of procedures

The following table show specific procedures to maintain and encourage excellent attendance in our schools:

| <u>Daily Procedure</u> | <u>By whom</u> | <u>Outcome/action</u> |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Parents inform the school by 8:45am, if their child is going to be absent that day. | Parents | Office/support staff update registration. Accurate register of children present in school for emergency purpose. |
| Pupils arrive at school between 8.45am and 8.55am to be in class by 9am | Parents | Children's attendance 97% or better and children meet end of year expectations. |
| Pupils arriving late to school are registered at the reception office by a Mentor or office | Office in charge of late registration | Absence mark on SIMS amended to a late mark by Attendance Mentor. |
| Teachers record attendance using SIMS. This is done at 9am and by 2pm. Teachers discuss attendance or lateness concerns with parent/carer. | Teacher & designated support staff | Accurate register of children present in school for emergency purpose. If SIMS is not working then staffs use a paper register, if required. |
| 1 st day absence phone calls are made to inform parents of their child's unexplained absence for that day. | Office | LM or Office update attendance codes. Children are safeguarded. |
| Parents provide evidence, including dates of and reason of absence upon the child's return to school. | Parent | LM or Office collects at reception or teachers collect these and gives to Office/Mentor to log. Children are safeguarded |
| <u>Weekly procedure</u> | <u>By whom</u> | <u>Outcome/action</u> |
| Attendance and punctuality statistics produced and shared in celebration assembly, displayed in school attendance boards. | Office Deputy Head | Children are able to see which class/es have been successful with their attendance and punctuality. Children are inspired to be in school. |

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| Absence codes for individual pupils are updated using SIMS to show reason for absence. | Office | Information provided here is used to provide targeted intervention as appropriate. |
| <u>Half termly and termly procedures</u> | <u>By whom</u> | <u>Outcome/action</u> |
| Analyse attendance/punctuality data to monitor trends and progress during Inclusion meetings. | Office Deputy Head Inclusion Team | Inclusion team put in place an action plan for children or groups of children who have low attendance or are consistently late. Children attend school on time. Children's outcomes towards end of year expectations are improved. |
| Weekly assemblies to promote attendance/punctuality. | Deputy Head HOS Teachers | Raises awareness of the importance of being in school. Attendance and punctuality improves across the school. |
| Discussions regarding responses to specific attendance and/or punctuality concerns of any particular cohort of pupils. | Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Head and Head of School. | Actions put in place to target groups of pupils regarding attendance or punctuality. Children's outcomes towards end of year expectations are improved. |
| Individual attendance/punctuality discussed with pupils and families, at parents' meeting. | Class Teachers Office | Mentoring and advice on attendance/punctuality issues provided to all families. Children's outcomes towards end of year expectations are improved. |
| Analyse attendance/punctuality data and information to identify cases of concern and develop appropriate interventions | Deputy Head Office | Targeted intervention for individual concerns. Children's outcomes towards end of year expectations are improved. |
| Meeting to discuss individual cases, monitor progress and refer new concerns. Support and meetings provided for pupils and families. | Deputy Head Office | Targeted intervention for individual concerns. Children's outcomes towards end of year expectations are improved. |
| Review success and impact of attendance/punctuality strategies for the term. | Office Deputy Head | Amend and refine interventions as appropriate |
| Teachers to discuss attendance or punctuality concerns during parents/teacher meetings. | Teachers | Pastoral Care Manager to give up-to-date report on attendance. |

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| | | Teacher to share with parents and stress the benefits of being in school for their child. |
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Extended Holidays

Taking holidays in term time will affect children’s schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Parents must remember that any savings they think they may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to their child’s education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday, leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstance. The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that any visit is legitimate and safe for child/children.

Only the Executive Head may grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- death of parent or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/children, please complete the required form, which you can obtain from the Attendance mentor. The Executive Head Teacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Executive Head teacher’s authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

“If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence.” The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- ‘Parent’ includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.