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Dear Parents and Carers

School Attendance

We are writing this special letter to you about attendance to provide you with a clear outline of absence procedures and the School's and Local Authority's response to poor pupil attendance. The Governors are required to promote high levels of attendance and will take action where it is deemed there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence. Presently school attendance has dropped below the national level. If a child misses more than 10% of their school sessions they are considered to be persistently absent from school by the Department of Education. It is the role of the school to be proactive in addressing patterns of persistent absence.

Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. However, we do understand there may be times when absence is unavoidable and therefore acceptable. This letter outlines the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is categorised as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where the reason for the absence is considered to be valid. Unauthorised absence is coded where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Unacceptable Reasons

The following reasons are considered unacceptable:

- shopping visits
- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- parental illness/ tiredness

Persistent unauthorised absences will be referred to the Early Help Unit to establish why the child is absent from school.

Illness and First Day Calling

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 9.00am. Alternatively call in in person at the Office or speak to the class teacher if you are dropping off another sibling. It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information, we have a duty to contact you so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure. Please do not email your child's absence as the email may not be read which would result in the office calling to question your child's absence.

We realise at this time of year, children are more prone to coughs and colds however most children are able to cope at school after a dose of painkiller prior to coming to school, therefore not missing vital learning. You are always

welcome to come into school at lunchtime to administer another dose of medication should you feel it is necessary. We will contact you should your child become progressively unwell during the day.

Where a child is absent through more serious illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the School Health Service.

Leave of Absence:

Holidays

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. The only exemption to this is where parents serve in the armed forces (this does not extend to the emergency services i.e. Police, Fire, Ambulance etc.). Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported as a matter of course to the Early Help Unit; we are under obligation to do this.

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours; however we appreciate that this may not always be possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day parents must collect children from the office, signing the child out and then back in on return. Please indicate in advance whether the child will be returning for the midday meal. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences.

Emergency Occasions

There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family complications, etc. where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs so far as is reasonable.

What we are aiming for:

Average attendance should be around 96% for the year, with outstanding attendance considered to be above 98%.

What is considered as poor attendance:

We have serious concerns if a child's attendance drops below 90%. In this school we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 98%. We monitor attendance and provide termly reports on each pupil's attendance.

The children are given their weekly class attendance at assembly. If the class has had 98% or more, they receive extra playtime as a reward for their achievement. At the end of each half term we praise those children with 100% attendance. We also identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90%. We shall issue a courtesy letter following guidance of the Attendance Procedure. We shall also then make a telephone call informing parents/carers and inviting them in for a meeting to discuss attendance. We shall continue to monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and anticipate a pattern of unbroken weeks developing going forward.

We trust these notes will be of benefit to you in providing a clear understanding about the School's expectations in this matter.

We would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our attendance record. We hope that we can work together to raise levels of attendance which will help enable all children to learn and develop through their time at school.

Yours

Kathryn King