



27th January 2022

ATTENDANCE

Dear Parents / Carers,

I want to start this letter by thanking those of you who bring your child to school every day. Your support for their education is invaluable and the benefits they gain from being at school every day cannot be underestimated. The school works incredibly hard to support those of you who struggle with attendance. The past three Ofsted reports have commented on the school's attendance record. The last report from January 2020 stated:

Although overall levels of attendance have improved over time, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is still too high. Leaders have started working with individual pupils closely on this, also involving teachers. This work needs to develop so that all pupils attend well.

Since the report was issued we have introduced a number of incentives to tackle the problem which have included:

- Attendance trophies for the class with the best attendance
- An attendance chart which displays weekly class figures
- Attendance monopoly which rewards these classes that have attendance of 95% and over
- An attendance toy shop for children who come to school every day for 6 weeks and who aren't late
- Attendance meetings with myself and Mrs Mattholie to explore reasons why families struggle with attendance
- A Walking Bus
- Boards outside school which tell of the impact a child's absence has on their education and future chances
- Monthly meetings with senior leaders and the school's Attendance Officer to address the high level of Persistent Absentees we have at the school and strategies we can use to support these identified families
- Meetings with the county Attendance Improvement Officer

Yet despite these incentives being introduced there are a large number of children who continue to be persistently absent from school. The following guidelines make it very clear the irreparable damage absence from school has on a child's life chances:

If a child's attendance falls below the 90 per cent guideline for persistent absence then this equates to 20 days absence from school, which potentially is 80 lessons missed. Parents may not be aware of the cumulative affect of the absence.

Persistent absenteeism is one of the few areas of school life that concerns me the most. Whilst we work hard to understand difficulties families experience all too often the effort required to bring a child to school every day is not sustained.

Whilst the COVID pandemic has severely affected children's attendance across the country over the past twenty months since school returned full time in March 2021 persistent absenteeism remains a problem.

Where we have concerns of a persistent nature around a child's absence, a fixed penalty notice will be issued. The following guidance has been issued to all schools by the county in support of children whose attendance is an ongoing issue.

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools, academies or other maintained or alternative provision. A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child's regular attendance. It may be particularly effective at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued

- Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The pupil must have at least 15 sessions (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term
- The school must have sent a formal warning letter to each parent separately, addressed and on school headed paper.
- **The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.**

I urge those of you who have received letters or phone calls from the school about your child's attendance to let us know of the difficulties you are experiencing and to work with us so that we can give your child the best possible start to their life and to give them the chances they deserve.

Yours sincerely



Headteacher