

# ATTENDANCE MATTERS



## WHERE DO WE STAND?



Information for Parents & Carers

## **Why is good attendance so important?**

As we are sure you are aware, we have worked hard to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality, both of which have a huge impact on the progress that your child makes in school. One of the most important things that you can do to support your child is to get them into school, on time, every day. There are so many vital benefits, such as:

- Children who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve good results and reach their full potential.
- Attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development.
- Good attendance will help you to give your child the best possible start in life.
- Good attendance helps develop learning habits that will last into later life.
- Children who have attended their school regularly have a better chance of getting and keeping a good job.

## **Does it really matter if my child is late or absent from time to time?**

You will no doubt have seen some of the statistics on the Attendance Noticeboard outside the school which highlight the importance of good attendance and punctual arrival at school – for example, did you know that:

- 5 minutes late every day is over 3 days lost in a school year?
- 10 minutes late every day is over 6 days lost in a school year?
- 15 minutes late every day is nearly 10 days lost in a school year?
- If your child has 90% attendance, it means that they have been absent from lessons for the equivalent of half a day every week?
- 90% attendance means your child has missed nearly four weeks of lessons in the school year?
- 90% attendance over 5 years means a child has missed one half of a school year?
- 80% attendance over 5 years means a child has missed a whole school year?

## **Do you need a letter explaining my child's absence?**

We expect you to telephone us **every day that your child is absent**. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. However, we also request a written explanation for the absence on your child's return to school - this can either be by letter, or by using the absence notification slips available from the school office.

If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report. For more information about illness procedures, please see our school website.

## **What are the rules relating to holidays and other unauthorised absences?**

In response to the September 2014 amendments to Suffolk County Council's Penalty Notices Code of Conduct to tackle non-school attendance, Newmarket schools have agreed to issue fixed penalty notice fines when eight or more unauthorised absence sessions (i.e. 4 whole days in total) have occurred.

Leave of absence must be taken in school closure periods unless there are rare and strictly exceptional circumstances. The Penalty is **£60 per parent/carer, per child**, payable within **21 days**. If not paid within 21 days, the Penalty increases to **£120 per parent/carer, per child**, payable between **21 and 28 days**. If the Penalty is not paid within 28 days of issue, the Local Authority will start legal proceedings against you which may lead to a fine of **£1000**.

The regulations relating to truancy, i.e. when a pupil has, in the company of a parent or carer, been stopped during a 'truancy sweep' conducted by Police and Education Welfare Officers, and the parent has failed to give a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence which the school has confirmed is unauthorised, remain unchanged.

If you intend to take your child out of school for a planned leave of absence, please complete a red form available from the office. As always, we are extremely grateful for your support in ensuring that your child is in school regularly and on time; however, please be advised that we will be enforcing penalty notices rigorously when necessary.

Fortnightly report generated by **Office Administrator**:

From September for pupils with attendance < 90% in previous year

From October half term for pupil with attendance < 95% in current year



If attendance is below 95%, yellow advice slip will be sent to parents, informing them that their child's attendance is being closely monitored (invitation to discuss further if they wish to do so)



If attendance drops in the next fortnight, **Warning Letter 1** will be sent to parents (except Nursery - attendance monitored) (reminder of expectations and consequences if this does not improve)



If attendance drops in the next fortnight **OR** attendance is below 90%, **Warning Letter 2** will be sent to parents (except Nursery - separate letter) (no absence to be authorised without medical evidence)



If attendance drops in the next fortnight **OR** attendance remains below 90%, the **Headteacher** will speak to parents (reminder of expectations and consequences if this does not improve)



If attendance drops in the next fortnight **OR** attendance remains below 90%, parents will be invited to a meeting with the **Headteacher** and **Education Welfare Officer**



If attendance drops in the next fortnight **OR** attendance remains below 90% **with any unauthorised absences**, a referral will be made to the **Education Welfare Service** and parents will be sent a **Warning Letter** by the **Education Welfare Officer**



If attendance drops in the next fortnight **OR** attendance remains below 90% **with any unauthorised absences**, the **Education Welfare Service** will begin official proceedings

**IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE:**

A **Fixed Penalty Notice Fine** of **£60 per pupil, per parent** will be issued when **eight or more sessions (four or more days)** of unauthorised absence have occurred in an academic year