

October 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: School Attendance

Bewdley Primary School is working in partnership with parents to improve school attendance. We want to highlight the importance of attending school and the impact poor attendance has on academic and social achievement. **We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly.**

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- find it difficult to maintain friendships and are often more anxious
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work
- do not achieve so well in tests and exams and make slower progress
- have gaps in their learning and understanding that are difficult to close

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year (our target for every child is 97%)	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent
95%	9 days	2 weeks
90%	19 days	4 weeks
85%	29 days	6 weeks
80%	38 days	8 weeks

****Absence at 90% or below is classed as Persistent Absence***

Absence, including holiday requests can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006. **Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.**

We recognise in cases of genuine illness it is not appropriate for children to be in school and we insist pupils with sickness and diarrhoea are kept off school for 48 hours after the last symptom. However, if your child is just a little under the weather, has a cough or a cold or is tired they should still be in school. It is important that if your child has an ongoing medical condition which results in absences that you provide us with the appropriate paperwork so that we can keep this on record.

Parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, non-urgent medical or dental appointments, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded

as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendship with peers and support from staff can provide children with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. **Failing to send your child to school regularly without a good reason is a criminal offence.**

Legal action that may be taken includes:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** For example, for holiday absence, the penalty is £60 per child per parent. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £240. Failure to pay may result in prosecution or the fines being increased.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - magistrates can fine each parent. In the past, magistrates have fined up to £1000 per child, plus costs and imposed Parenting Orders.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - magistrates can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and/or impose a period of imprisonment of up to three months.

Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If your child's level of absence is of serious concern you will receive another letter advising you about improving attendance. After this, any further unauthorised absence may result in the Local Authority taking legal action.

Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefitting fully from all the learning opportunities

Yours sincerely,



Jane Woakes