



Kirtlington
C.E. School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As you may be aware, attendance at school is both a national and a local priority. I thought it would be beneficial to clarify why this is such an important issue and why both the government and we as a school place such importance on consistently excellent attendance.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE

School attendance is vital to the life chances of children and young people. Children with poor attendance do less well at school and there is a link between the number of days a child is absent and their earnings later in life. High attendance rates are a significant factor in maintaining the quality of education that we provide. If we are to maintain the continuity of education for our pupils, maximise their potential and prepare them for the world, we must ensure that absenteeism is kept to an absolute minimum.

WHAT IS GOOD ATTENDANCE?

Good attendance means that your child is always present in school, and only misses minimum time due to illness.

100% attendance = excellent

98-99% attendance = good

95-98% attendance = acceptable

We aim for all our children to have attendance above 95% over the academic year.

EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE ALLOWS YOUR CHILD A BETTER OPPORTUNITY

- To make new friends
- To learn and enjoy new experiences
- To develop skills that you will need in later life
- To take part in a wide range of activities in and outside of school
- To learn how to look after themselves and encourage independence
- To feel safe and listened to
- To improve their chances of having a good career or life chances
- To make a positive contribution to the Kirtlington community

WHAT MIGHT BE THE IMPACT OF POOR ATTENDANCE ON YOUR CHILD?

- Attendance of 95% for the year equals 10 days that your child has been absent, that is 2 full school weeks of your child's learning missed for that year.
- Attendance of 90% for the year equals 19 days that your child has been absent, that is almost 4 school weeks missed.

Government research shows that students who have less than 90% attendance (19 or more days missed in a year) achieve, on average, a whole grade lower than expected in examinations. There is a link between the number of days a child is absent and their average earnings in later life. A child is not in school 175 days a year - plenty of time to go shopping, take holidays, visit family or attend routine appointments.

Attendance less than 90% is classed as '**persistent absence**' and will trigger intervention from the school.

ILLNESS

Being ill may prevent your child coming to school. However, slight colds, minor aches and pains, or tiredness are not reasons for absence. If you are unsure if your child is unwell enough to miss school, please visit [Is my child too ill for school?](#) which offers guidance on common childhood illnesses.

If you find that your child appears to be ill more commonly than average, you may want to visit your GP to check for any underlying health concerns. If your child has a medical condition that causes them to miss school, please discuss this with the school and an Individual Healthcare Plan can be established.

Remember, maintaining a good diet, consistent sleep routine and regular exercise will all help your child to stay healthy and well.

Please note: the school day has two attendance sessions (morning and afternoon). If your child seems unwell in the morning but seems better by lunchtime, please bring them into school for the afternoon session, this will help to keep your child's attendance as high as possible. If your child ever has to have an emergency medical appointment, please ensure that you try to make it at the beginning or end of a school day, this way your child would only miss a maximum of half a day for the appointment.

Mental Health

If you or your child suffer from a mental health difficulty that impacts on school attendance please speak to the school and we can offer support.

HOLIDAYS

Taking pupils out of school for holidays is not acceptable. Whilst we understand the difficulties parents/carers may have in organising holidays during the school holidays and the benefits to be had from cheaper term-time holidays, this type of absence is detrimental to a child's education. In September 2013, government guidelines advised that **no absence should be authorised** in advance except when due to 'exceptional circumstances'. If you take your child out of school for a holiday, this will be unauthorised and you may be issued with an Education Penalty Notice.

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR CHILD DOES NOT ATTEND SCHOOL REGULARLY?

If your child's attendance falls below 96%

- It will be monitored by the school.
- You may be sent a letter indicating that your child's attendance is a concern.
- You may be contacted by the school to discuss the reasons for your child's absences.

If your child's attendance falls below 90% (persistently absent)

- You will be invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss how we can work together to improve your child's attendance.
- If your child's attendance does not improve, school may initiate an Early Help Plan.
- As a school we are responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the LA.
- As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly.

We understand that all families can have tricky times, and we want to offer full support to families. We ask that you keep us in the loop if you are having difficulties, and maintain an open and honest dialogue with the school which will enable us to support you.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUALITY

Whilst the majority of pupils arrive at school on time, occasionally children may arrive late. Parents may not be aware of the difficulties experienced by children even when they are only a few minutes late each day.

- Being late to school reduces learning time.
- 10 minutes late a day = almost a whole hour of lessons missed each week, over the school year this equates to 2 whole weeks.
- Your child will miss his/her teacher's instructions for the start of the day or first lesson.
- Arriving late causes disruption to the whole class as well as to your child.
- Children are often very embarrassed and upset at coming into class late.

The school gates open at 8:35am. We ask that all parents ensure that their children are **in class** for register between 8:40 and 8:50am. Children who arrive between 8:50 and 9:00am will be marked as 'Late' and children who arrive after 9:00am will be marked as 'U', and they will incur an unauthorised absence.

I hope that you have found this information useful. For further information please see our Attendance Policy on the school website. Please could we ask that all parents whose children are frequently late or have poor attendance make a New Year's resolution to ensure that their attendance and/or punctuality improves in 2024 as it really can make a difference to the achievements of your child and other children in their class.

Kind regards,

Kyla Bates

Headteacher