



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

This term has seen waves of viral illnesses affecting pupils and adults throughout the school community. This has had an understandable impact on school attendance and many pupils are now flagged as amber (<95%) or red (<90%) as a result.

At this point in the year a single day equates to around 2% of the total and, although disruptive to learning, unavoidable absence due to short winter illnesses should not be a significant concern for the majority. However, across a school year, 5% absence equates to just 9.5 days missed and 10% to 19 days. Some pupils are already approaching these figures with 28 weeks of school still to go. We will write to all parents before the end of term with a summary of attendance. You can also see live data in the Scholarpack Parent App.

We appreciate that pandemic experiences have made parents cautious about sending children to school if they seem unwell, and we certainly don't want infectious disease to spread (*see box to right about scarlet fever, for example*), but this caution needs to be balanced against maintaining attendance. In general, if children are fit enough to be out of bed, and are not afflicted with something that has an exclusion period associated, they're *probably* fit enough to be in school too.

We have also seen a number of absences for family holidays this term which adds to unavoidable absence caused by illness. This has been an increasing concern across the County, and schools have been asked to distribute a Local Authority letter on the topic, which is overleaf.

Parents are reminded that there are 190 days of school – leaving 175 days each year for holidays to be taken – and term-time holidays are seldom an exceptional circumstance for this reason.

ADULT LEARNING

The 'Getting ahead with English' course for parents to understand the demands and terminology of the primary English curriculum is now underway with 3 sessions remaining. New learners are welcome to join this coming Monday from 1.30pm. Participants also have the opportunity to take part in a funded family day out to the Lakes with their child(ren)!

Spring course to be themed around wellbeing

JOTTER APP - INCLUDES SCHOOL CALENDAR

A reminder that the **School Jotter** app also gives easy access to our **school calendar** which will let you know what's happening day-by-day. Search **School Jotter** in your phone's app store.

SCARLET FEVER

We have had a confirmed case of scarlet fever in school this week. Two cases of this illness are designated 'an outbreak'.

Scarlet fever is usually a mild illness caused by bacteria that occurs most often in the winter and spring.

Symptoms include a high temperature, rash, sore throat, flushed cheeks, and swollen tongue. Scarlet fever is highly contagious and is spread by close contact with someone carrying the bacteria. It takes around 2 to 5 days to develop symptoms after exposure to these bacteria. **Without treatment, the infectious phase lasts 2-3 weeks.**

Children with symptoms should be isolated, seen by GPs and prescribed antibiotics if scarlet fever is suspected. **They should return to school 24 hours after starting the antibiotics.**

DECEMBER DATES

We are looking forward to the following during December:

- EYFS nativity – Weds 7th 2.30pm
- Christmas Jumper Day (donations to Save the Children) - Thurs 8th
- KS1 nativity – Tues 13th – 3pm
- Class 2 nativity – Weds 14th – 3pm
- Christmas Dinner – Thurs 15th
- KS2 Carol Service at St Cuthbert's Church; Afternoon of Friday 16th Dec – time tbc
- Tuesday 20th – end of term

KS1&2 PROGRESS EVENINGS

With the autumn evenings already being very busy, we will hold mid-year progress evenings at the start of the Spring term on January 10th & 11th.

Appointments will be scheduled using the Schoolcloud system; details to follow in December.

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Dear Parent/Carer

November 2022

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Absence from school due to family holidays taken in term time can be disruptive to children's education. It can also be disruptive to other pupils in the class. In addition, I am concerned that there could be some misunderstanding of the law in relation to absence from school because of holidays taken during term time.

Any absence from school should be avoided unless for medical reasons, as it can have a serious effect on your child's educational progress, and can create difficulties for them on their return to school, particularly if they are joining a new school or class. It is important to note that only the Headteacher can authorise absence from school. Parents/carers cannot authorise the absence themselves.

Changes to legislation have removed the discretionary 10 day period of absence which covered family holidays. Schools can only grant requests for a leave of absence in term time in exceptional circumstances. If you believe that your circumstances are exceptional you can make a request to the school. In considering your request, the school will take into account the child's age, the time of year of the absence and the nature of the visit. The Headteacher will also consider the child's stage of education and progress and the child's overall attendance record. It is highly unlikely that leave will be authorised if examinations or other important tests will be missed. Headteachers will not authorise absence unless they believe your circumstances are exceptional. In all cases it is best to have a discussion with the Headteacher in order to look at the issues as they affect your child.

All unauthorised absences, including holidays that have not been sanctioned by the Headteacher, are accumulated and parents who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. The amount is £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. It is therefore essential that parents take this into account if they are thinking of a family holiday in term-time.

The Department for Education define persistent absenteeism as below 90% attendance and schools may wish to use this figure to determine whether or not to pursue legal action such as the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Many people are working very hard to help your child to succeed. I trust you will support us in this matter, in partnership with your child's school.

Yours sincerely



Daniel Barton

Assistant Director – Education & Skills