



Harwell Community Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Our vision for all the children is to help them develop a love of learning, along with the skills and the ways of thinking to excel at whatever they choose to do in the future.

Regular school attendance is an important part of raising standards and of children achieving more. Research has shown that consistent high attendance and good punctuality are crucial factors in pupils achieving their full potential. In the last two years, attendance rates were considerably lower for some children due to the Covid19 pandemic. For those children, there were many missed learning opportunities.

The expected rate of attendance is 97% which allows for normal childhood illnesses and we have a responsibility to continually monitor attendance and work with you as parents and carers to help children improve their attendance rate if it falls below this level.

I wanted to set out for you the steps we are expected to follow so that you are aware of what may happen. The DfE issued updated guidance for schools in May which we are expected to follow - [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/92222/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_GOV.UK.pdf).

We do, of course, recognise that individual circumstances vary.

Regular monitoring of attendance

We have live monitoring showing attendance rates from the 1st September and we have to provide daily attendance updates to the DfE. My Senior Leadership Team will review with me any children who fall below the expected rate of attendance on a monthly basis and one of us will contact parents - this may be a face to face conversation, a telephone call, an email or a letter. We may also contact Health professionals e.g. a letter to the child's GP or a referral to the School Nurse Team.

Parenting Contracts

We will be expected to set up formal parenting contracts if school attendance does not improve.

Persistent Absenteeism

If attendance falls below 90%, this is considered persistent absenteeism (for your reference this is about 6 days absence in a long term). We have to make a referral to the County Attendance Team. We will have to confirm to them all the steps we have taken and the interaction between school and parents before attendance has fallen to this level. If a child has an attendance level of 90%, this will

equate to a whole year of missed learning opportunities over their school life.

Severe Absenteeism

This is a new category in the DfE guidance and is if attendance is below 50%. Long before this, we would have been working with parents and the County Attendance Team.

Reporting Absence

If your child is unable to attend school due to illness, you are expected to email or telephone the office on the first and each subsequent day of the absence by 08:55 am, unless our admin team has advised you of a very specific length of absence required for certain conditions - e.g vomiting or diarrhoea. If you are unsure of whether your child's illness requires a statutory absence, please call the office as they have up to date guidance from Public Health for all childhood illnesses.

Holidays in term time

Authorising holidays in term times can only happen in very exceptional circumstances. We are sending all families attendance guidance to help with this understanding. We will be expected, by the County Attendance Team, to refer families taking term time holidays to consider a penalty notice. A blanket penalty notice letter is being sent to you all now so that you are aware of this. A penalty notice is intended as an alternative to a prosecution but as you will see from the letter, failure to pay the penalty will lead to a prosecution.

Thank you for reading to the end of this letter. I am aware that this may seem daunting but we appreciate your collaboration in supporting your child to achieve their best; good attendance does make a difference.

Warm regards

Bryn Gibson

Headteacher