Attendance guidance for parents/guardians

If you are the parent/carer of (or are responsible for/have day to day care for) a child aged between 5 and 16 who is registered at school, it is your responsibility to ensure your child attends school each day it is open and arrives on time.

All students' attendance is monitored daily with action taken to address patterns of absence or concerns and rewards given to celebrate excellent & good attendance. If you or your child has any concerns with their school attendance you should contact the school immediately.

What can you do to support your child?

- Make sure that your child attends each day it is open, arrives on time and keeps to the school's rules.
- If your child is unable to attend school you must telephone the school leaving a message on the absence line on each day of absence, clearly stating their name, class and reason for absence. If no reason for absence is given, the absence will be unauthorised.

What lowers your School Attendance Percentage

- Arriving late into school
- Doctors' appointments during school time
- Dentist appointments during school time
- Family holidays
- Illness
- Odd days off

What to do when your child will not be in school

We expect a parent to telephone the school on each day your child is absent. Please tell us your child's name, class, reason for absence and when your child will return to school. When your child returns to school please provided a written explanation for absence.

Illness

Telephone the school before 8:40am on 01206 382736 and leave a message on the absence line on each day of absence and every day thereafter, clearly stating their name, tutor group and reason for absence. If no reason for absence is given, the absence will be unauthorised. We will not assume that a student's consecutive absent day(s) are for illness. (You may be asked for medical/ other evidence to support your child's absence).

Medical Appointments

Please inform the school in advance of any medical appointments that your child has. We require the date and time of the appointment with a guide to how long your child will be absent from school. Students should attend school before and after an appointment where possible. The school recognise that some medical appointments, such as consultant appointments at hospital and orthodontist appointments might not be flexible, please note that these appointments will lower your child's school attendance; you should submit an appointment card or letter to confirm the appointment.

Family Holidays and requests for absence

As per our school's attendance policy and the Essex Code of Conduct relating to school attendance, that the law requires parents to seek permission from the Head teacher to take their child out of school during term time. The law states permission can only be granted if: 1. An application has been made in advance by the parent the child normally lives with, 2. There are exceptional circumstances.

If you do take your child out of school for this time, **the absences will not be authorised** and the school will make a referral to the local authority who may issue a penalty notice to each parent of £80 for each child, per parent to be paid within 21 days, for the first offence. If the penalty is not paid within the time scale the penalty will increase to £160. If the higher penalty is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority will then institute legal proceedings against you in the magistrate's court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

Second offence, the fine amount will be £160 per parent, per child, a reduced rate is not available.

Third offence, a penalty notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to Magistrates Court.

The school requires parents to complete a 'Leave of Absence' application form. Applications for exceptional holiday leave will be considered by the Head Teacher who will advise the applicant via telephone call or letter whether the leave will be authorised or not.

The Leave of Absence form can be obtained from the school office or website.

Leave of absence for approved sporting activities and other educational opportunities will be considered as normal and should be applied for using the same form.

If the school is unable to agree to your request and you inform the school that your child is absent due to illness during the same dates, you may be issued with a fixed penalty noticed issued by the Local Authority. All absences whether authorised or unauthorised are recorded on your child's attendance register and will lower your child's attendance.

Lateness into school

If your child arrives late into school for whatever reason it is important that they go to the school office to sign in, register for lunch and explain why they are late.

Monitored Student Attendance

The current persistent absence threshold definition by the Department of Education is any student who has 10% or above absence. Therefore the school will notify parents on a regular basis when their child's attendance becomes a cause for concern.

Cause for concern

When a student's attendance becomes a cause for concern, parents will be notified and may be invited into school to discuss any concerns that are having an impact on their education. Support is then put into place to ensure your child gets the education they are entitled to. Following this, if there is no immediate improvement referrals to other agencies may be sort.

Recognition

We celebrate excellent attendance throughout the year with our class teddy bear, CAM and our pupil teddy bear, SAM. Class attendance is also recognised in our weekly newsletters.

The Law

By law, all children of compulsory school age must get suitable full-time education. School starting date if the beginning of the term after which the child reaches their 5th birthday; school leaving date if the last Friday in June of the academic year in which the child reaches their 16th birthday.

As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without your knowledge. You run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice or prosecution.

A penalty notice of £80 per parent per child may be issued by the Local Authority as an alternative to prosecution. Failure to pay will lead to prosecution.

Persistence absences can lead to parents can be fined up to £2,500 and/or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly. This would be heard in the Magistrates' Court.

We look forward to working with you as parents and carers to support your child's attendance ensuring they receive the education they are entitled too. If you or your child has any concerns with their school attendance you should contact Mrs Martin in the school office on 01206 382736.