



learning, caring, preparing

Donnington Wood Infant School & Nursery
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Headteacher :Mrs C Boddy

7th September 2020

School Attendance

A very important message for all parents

Dear Parents,

At Donnington Wood Infant School & Nursery we have been working hard over the past few years in partnership with parents to improve school attendance. Many parents made sure their children attended school regularly and helped us raise our overall attendance levels. We also managed to reduce the number of children arriving late each day.

We are really excited to have school and nursery fully again as for the past six months many children have not attended school or nursery due to COVID-19. Children have missed face to face contact with their teachers and friends and in order to get back on track as quickly as possible we need you to work with us to ensure your child attends school on time every day. We are aware that for some children and their families, returning the routine of the school day will be challenging. If you or your child would like any additional support with returning to school or school attendance then please contact the school office by phone or email.

During lockdown the rules and law around school attendance were suspended. These rules, however, have now be reintroduced and so it is vital that we work together as a school community to get every child in school every day. This means that parents of children (statutory school age) with poor attendance will be assessed for legal action or issued with a Penalty Notice if their children have continuing unauthorised absence from school.

We keep detailed and accurate records regarding pupil attendance and we will be tracking and monitoring attendance daily. If you arrive late (after 8:55) you will need to come to the school office and sign in.

It is vital that we are informed by telephone if your child is absent and you must tell us the reason for their absence. We endeavour to make contact with parents on the first day that a child is absent and no reason has been given. Absences where no reason is given will be recorded as unauthorised.

It is parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly (once they are statutory school age) without good reason is a criminal offence.

Absence can only be authorised by the **Head Teacher**, within the boundaries set by the Education Act 1996. Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, 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. Leave in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. If you have any questions relating to absence and COVID-19 then please contact the school office by phone or email.

If your child's level of attendance falls below 93% we will inform you and seek to work with you to improve the situation. If attendance does not improve, any further unauthorised absence (children of statutory school age) may result in the Local Authority taking legal action.

Legal action that may be taken for statutory school-age children include:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - Magistrates can fine each parent up to £1000 per child and add costs.
- **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 and add costs. Additionally Magistrates may impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

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

We will keep the school community informed regularly through the school newsletter about attendance and punctuality. We know that you want the best for your child and will ensure that they are in school on time every day.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Boddy or Mrs Butler if you have any queries or questions about school attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs C Boddy