

EMS WEEKLY BULLETIN

Dear Parents,

I thought I would take this opportunity to update you on the expectations and procedures we will be following in relation to school attendance.

Our expectation is that pupils attend school every day for every session. We believe that regular, uninterrupted attendance secures the best possible learning achievement for all our children and we are committed to working in partnership with families to achieve this. Schools are expected to monitor all pupils' attendance records closely and to pass these on to the receiving school when pupils transfer.

The current trigger threshold is 95% and although this does not sound much in practice, a child with 95% attendance has missed $\frac{1}{2}$ a day every 2 weeks, or 1 day a month or 2 weeks a year. In fact, by the time they finish middle school they will have received half a term's less education than their peers. I think this illustrates why, over time, regular attendance is important.

From September 2013, Headteachers no longer have discretion to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is the responsibility of parents to contact the school in writing when requesting any leave for their children so that each case can be considered on an individual basis.

The following situations might be considered examples of exceptional circumstances:

- The wedding day of a close family member
- Religious observance
- A family bereavement
- Educational purposes in another setting (previously agreed with the school / Local Authority).

Any request for absence which might be considered as exceptional circumstances should be put in writing to the Headteacher as far in advance as possible, including any relevant supporting documents. The decision whether to grant leave, and if so how much, remains with the Headteacher.

Holiday

In line with the new Department for Education regulations, no holiday will be authorised in term time unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances. Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in cases where pupils have been absent from school without authorisation for 10 or more half days. Currently penalties are set at £60 per child, per responsible adult within 21 days of receipt, and thereafter £120.

Medical and Other Appointments

We ask all parents to avoid arranging routine medical / dental appointments during the school day. If circumstances make this unavoidable, please inform the school in advance. In the event of emergencies, please contact the school as soon as possible.

Lateness

School opens at **8.30am** and the register is taken at **8.40am**, after which a child will be marked as late and will need to sign in at the school office. Pupils who arrive **later than 9.05am without explanation** will be marked with unauthorised absence which can result in the issue of a Penalty Notice Warning.

Reporting Absence for Illness

Parents should inform the school by telephone or email of the reasons for their child's absence by 9.00am on the first day of the child's absence. If a child is absent with no explanation, school office staff will phone the parents to ascertain the reason. **Please make sure that we have up to date contact details.**

What is authorised and unauthorised attendance?

We will **not** authorise absence due to:

- Lateness
- Other family members' appointments
- Transport difficulties
- Holidays in term time

We are able to **authorise** (at the Headteacher's discretion) absence due to:

- Illness or medical treatment
- Education in a setting other than school (this would be pre-arranged and agreed with school)
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances (see above).

Penalty Notice Warnings

Penalty notice warnings are issued by the Local Authority in selected cases where pupils have been absent from school (not on holiday) without authorisation for at least 10 or more half days within a 12 week period. If, during the warning period, attendance does not improve, the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice as detailed above.

Monitoring

If your child's attendance falls below 95%, you will be contacted by the school to explain how this will be further monitored and any further action that may occur if attendance does not improve.

I hope that this helps clarify the situation with regards to attendance, but please do not hesitate to contact the school if you require any further details. Please see below some up to date attendance data:

Whole School Attendance	96.01%
Year 5 Attendance	96.17%
Year 6 Attendance	96.26%
Year 7 Attendance	95.86%
Year 8 Attendance	95.58%

We also currently have 98 pupils who have 100% attendance.

I hope you all have an enjoyable weekend.

Rob Christopher