



St Andrew's CE VC Primary School

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

Guidance for parents/
Carers and pupils

Heart and minds
working as one

WHAT ARE OUR SCHOOL(S) DOING TO SUPPORT ATTENDANCE?

(In The Sherborne School Partnership) all of our staff understand how important attendance is. Teachers emphasise this when talking to our pupils. It is expected that any work missed is caught up within a reasonable length of time. We also use assembly time to reinforce the link between achievement and attendance and offer rewards for good attendance.

We have just introduced a weekly **BET CLASS ATTENDANCE AWARD** with half termly individual **100% ATTENDANCE AWARDS** to encourage good attendance.

We monitor the attendance of individuals closely.

- Pupils with attendance below 92% that is not due to an on-going medical condition - parents will be contacted by letter
- If no improvement in attendance and attendance drops to 90% - parents are invited into school for a meeting
- If still no improvement in attendance and attendance drops below 85% - parents are invited into school to agree to a parenting contract.
- Those students whose attendance falls below 85% will be referred to the Local Authority who will also set targets for improved attendance and give the support necessary to achieve those targets.
- If attendance falls below 85% there is a risk that legal action will be used.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD ATTENDANCE

In recent years much research has been conducted on the importance of good attendance and the effect that poor attendance can have on students' attainment and their future life chances.

For example, 90% attendance might sound quite acceptable but what that means in reality is.....

- On average half a day's school missed every week (would an employer think this is an acceptable rate of attendance?)
- In one year 4 whole weeks of schooling missed
- In five years half of a school year missed.
- A GCSE grade drop in attainment in each subject
- Only a 50% chance of achieving their potential SATs

The better the attendance, the greater the achievement.

Across Dorset schools there is a clear pattern:

- If a student is absent for less than one day a month they have an 87% chance of getting 5A*-C at GCSE.
- If a student is absent for less than one day in a fortnight they have a 75% chance of getting 5A*-C.
- If a student is absent once a week or more they have only a
- chance of getting 5A*-C.

HABITS OF POOR ATTENDANCE

Habits of poor attendance and lateness in school are often repeated in working life. That is why future employers (and colleges/universities) ask schools to provide attendance and punctuality figures as part of references. Poor attendance in the work place cost the UK £32 billion in 2012. 342 million hours of work.

This is why we (our partnership) is making good attendance at school an absolute priority. By improving our attendance rate we will improve the standards that our pupils achieve and provide for them better chances in life. In the coming year we aim to raise our attendance rate to above 95%. We can only achieve this with your full support.

The view of Dorset County Council is as follows:-"Dorset County Council Children's Service Directorate, fully supports schools in expecting parents and carers to make sure that children and young people attend school on a regular basis. Any time away from school can have a significant impact on educational attainment, success in later life and longer terms health and well being.

Dorset County Council will be supporting all schools in ensuring the law is upheld. In law parents and carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance at school.

Therefore any unauthorised absence, such as taking holidays in term time, can result in a Fixed Term Penalty Notice. Failure to pay a Fixed Term Penalty Notice may result in a criminal conviction and a fine in the Magistrates Court of up to £1,000

WHAT PARENTS AND CARERS CAN DO TO HELP

If you feel that your son/daughter is unhappy at school please contact the school as quickly as possible. This will ensure that we can work together to resolve any issues before they become a major obstacle to attendance.

- Ensure that your son / daughter attends school regularly, arrives on time, follows the uniform guidelines and brings the necessary equipment for the day.
- Talk with your son / daughter about the importance of good attendance at school and how it can affect their future.
- If at all possible try to keep medical appointments outside of the school day, inform the school well in advance if this is not possible.
- Only grant days at home for GENUINE illness – you know your child... will they be feeling better two minutes after the bus has left?
- Do not take your son / daughter on holiday during term time (see overleaf).
- Check your son's / daughter's attendance. Praise and reward good attendance.
- Show real concern if attendance is becoming an issue.

REPORTING ABSENCES

If your son / daughter is too ill to attend school please contact your school by phone before 9.30am. Please do this for each day your child is away (unless you have informed us that s/he has been signed off by the doctor for an extended period of time).

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

There are 190 school days in a year and therefore 175 of holiday / weekends per year. Taking your son /daughter out of school for two weeks (ten school days) will reduce his / her attendance to 94% before any account is taken of days off for illness etc.

Research suggests that pupils who are taken out of school for holidays may never catch up on work missed. This can affect test results and is particularly harmful if the absence occurs in a national testing year.

The law (DofE School Attendance: August 2013) says that parents do not have the right to take their children out of school for holidays during term time.

However in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances schools can allow parents to take their children out of school for up to ten days in a year. We believe that we can only agree to holidays in truly EXCEPTIONAL circumstances since we must give priority to learning in the 190 days of school if our students are to achieve their very best.

If the school refuses a request for term time leave and the pupil is still taken out of school this is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Please understand that a refusal to authorised absence reflects our commitment to our children's attainment.

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School is a Rights Respecting School.

We work together to learn about and respect children's rights both locally and globally.

Our school report reflects the following articles:

"Your right to become the best you can be" and

"we have the children's best interests as our top priority" Article 29

"Your right to have information" Article 13

"Your right to learn and to go to school"

Article 28