

Navenby Church of England Primary School

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6th September 2024

ATTENDANCE

Dear Parents,

As we start this academic year, I want to write to you all reminding you of the school's stance on absence during term time.

School attendance is one of the high agenda items for the County (following the release of their strategy document last year) and for Ofsted and I am being challenged to make sure I am doing all I can to help children be in school by our Locality Lead.

Please can I urge you to take note of the following:

- Please make any medical and dental appointments out of school time where possible.
- Registers are taken at 8.55am and registration will close at 9.05am. **If a child arrives before 9.05am but after the register has been taken, they will be classed as 'late' and will be given the code 'L'. Any child who arrives after 9.05am will be marked 'Late after registration' (code 'U') and this is an unauthorised absence.** There are additional codes depending on the circumstances eg medical or visiting another school for a transition morning.
- If your child is not in school and we have not heard from you the reason why, the office staff will send a text asking you to contact school to advise us why your child is absent. If they haven't heard from you, they will then try calling you to try and find this out. If we cannot get hold of you, a message will be left for you to contact us. If we do not hear back from you by 10am, the absence will be logged as a safeguarding concern on our CPOMS system and marked as **unauthorised**.
- I appreciate that some children have medical conditions and require regular hospital visits or some periods of absence to recover; these are exceptional circumstances which cannot be avoided and so, providing we are informed of the absences as per the procedures above, these will not impact negatively when calculating their overall attendance.
- The expected attendance level is 95%+. County have then grouped children into the following categories if attendance falls below 95%:
 - 'At risk of persistent absence': 91 – 94%
 - 'Persistent absentee': 80 – 90%
 - 'At risk of severe persistent absence': 51 – 79%
 - 'Severe persistent absentee': 50% and belowIf your child starts to fall into any of the categories above, I will inform you of this at my earliest convenience. This is deemed a **'notice to improve'**; it is not a punitive measure, merely a courtesy email to alert you to your child's attendance data and also to stop the potential need for FPNs (see below)
- **Any absence** request should be put in writing using the form on the school website (or you can request a paper copy from the school office). **Any holiday taken in term time will automatically be unauthorised** regardless of the reason for the holiday. For all other requests, these will be looked at on an individual basis. Factors taken into account are:
 - The reason for the absence request and whether this is deemed an 'exceptional circumstance'
 - The length of the absence request
 - The child's current attendance rate



- Their current academic levels
- Their ability to catch up with any work they will be missing
- If they are accessing any intervention in school (specifically set up for them) which is running at that time

Depending on the outcome of these, the absence **may** be authorised. If the school believes holiday was taken in term time, yet did not receive a request for this absence, the school can apply for a Penalty Notice retrospectively, without issuing the 'notice to improve' letter. I would urge you, therefore, to always apply for any absence in term time using the relevant form.

Under a new code of conduct released for September 2024, the following guidelines come into play:

- The threshold for intervention is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be made up of from holiday taken in term time or a combination of holiday and unauthorised absence for lateness.
- In these circumstances, the term 'parent' means all natural parents whether they are married or not. It includes any person having parental responsibility for a child who, although not the child's natural parent, has care of that child. This means an adult with whom that child lives and who looks after the child on day-to-day basis.
- A 'Fixed Penalty Notice' (FPN) will be issued for any holiday taken in term time which exceeds **5 days in any given 10 week period**. I will be issuing the 'warning' letter to all parents explaining the course of action should I have to utilise this. For a first offence, if a parent pays within 21 days, the sum is now £80. If it is paid between 21 and 28 days of the notice being served in increases to £160. If the FPN is not paid after 28 days have elapsed, the Local Authority may elect to proceed with the matter by issuing criminal proceedings before the magistrates' court.
- FPNs will be sent to **all** adults who have parental responsibility for getting children to school including parents who are living as a 'family unit'. There is no right of appeal against a FPN
- **Lateness after registration** (code U) is **deemed as absence** and will contribute to that period's overall absence figure. FPNs can be initiated to families whose child is consistently late which means their child falls into one of the categories outlined above.
- To encourage children to attend school we will be offering the usual end of term rewards for good attendance (December - badges, April – medals, July – certificates).

It is important that children are in school accessing their entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum. Their progress and achievements are severely hampered by any absences as the curriculum is very fast paced. Even an absence for a couple of days can mean that they miss something vitally important which forms a barrier to future learning. Some children already have various gaps in their learning due to recent absences and are, therefore, always playing 'catch up'. The teachers and teaching assistants are working extremely hard to help the children catch up with this lost learning, some through additional interventions, and they can only do this if the children are in school. I am hoping that you can see the rationale behind this letter and the purpose for which it was written. If your children are in school with us, they have a much better chance of reaching their targets and thriving in their education not just here but in the future too.

The graphic on the next page shows the impact poor attendance has on a child's potential to succeed.

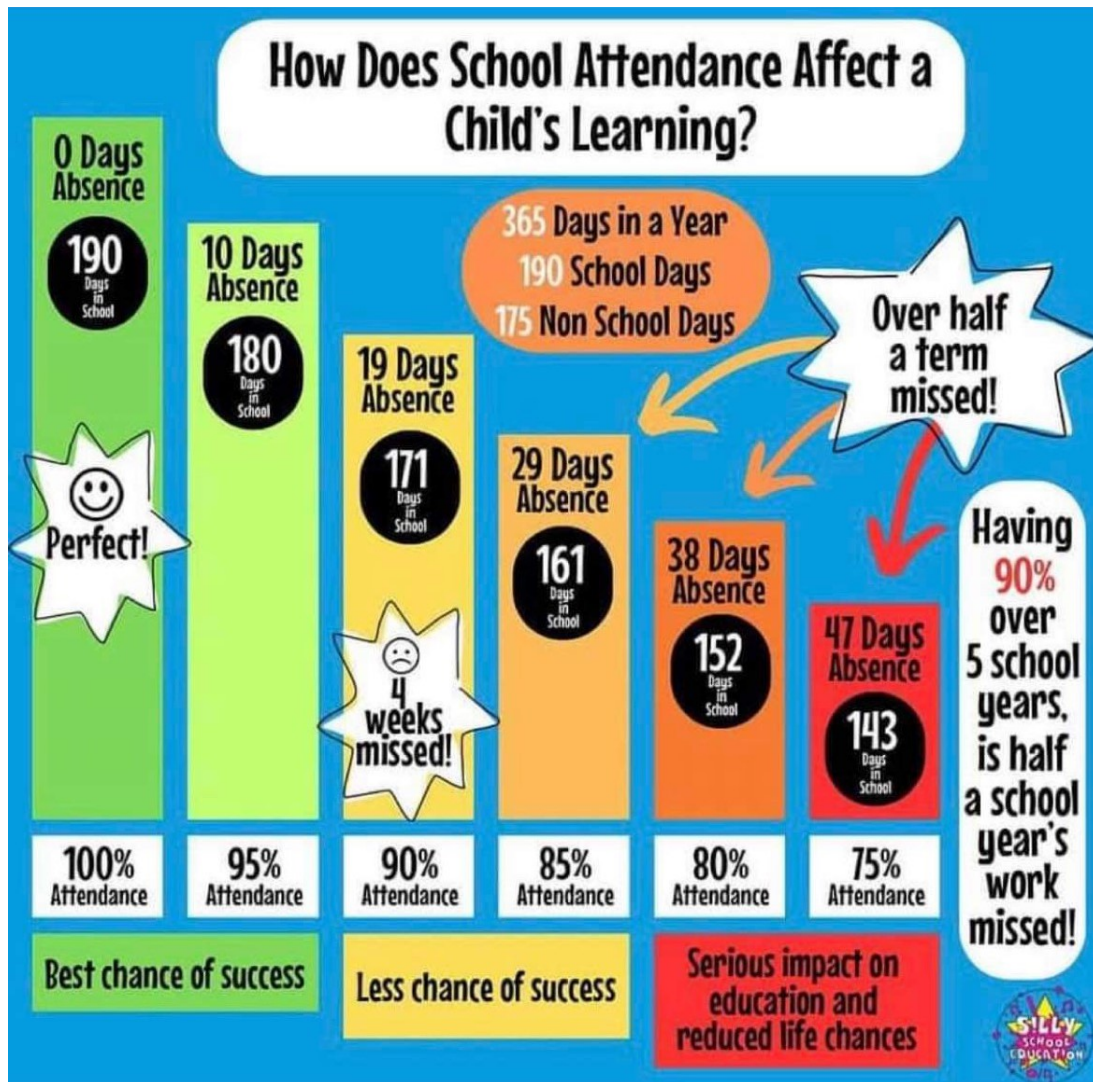
If you have any questions regarding the content of this letter, then I will be more than happy to meet with you to discuss them.

Yours sincerely,

C Elliott

Mr C Elliott
Headteacher.





School attendance and the Law

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure that the child receives efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and any special educational needs they may have. This can be met by the child regularly attending a school or alternative educational provision made by the LA or the school or by the parent providing other suitable educational provision.

The parent may be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 if they fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school at which they are a registered pupil.

Where a child has not attended regularly at school, the LA have the options of:

- issuing a Penalty Notice in respect of the parents of the child
- bringing proceedings before the family courts for an Educational Supervision Order
- prosecuting the parent under Section 444 before the Magistrates' Court.

