

NEW PERSISTENT ABSENCE THRESHOLD

I am pleased to inform you that whole school attendance has risen again this year to 95.5%, its highest level for 15 years. The number of students who are persistently absent from school has also declined for the third year in a row. Thank you for your support in helping to achieve this outstanding figure

From 1 September 2015, the Government is reducing the threshold from 15% to 10%. This will now class a student with attendance below 90% as a persistent absentee, compared with the previous figure of 85%, regardless of whether the school has authorised or unauthorised the absence. This equates to 38 sessions or 19 days of absence across the year.

Schools are no longer judged solely on their overall attendance figures but also on the number of students who fall into the persistent absence category.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to fulfil their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure that regular attendance is maintained. The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. This highlights the fact that there will be an impact on your child's education and exam results if their attendance is not consistently above 95% throughout their schooling.

Minor ailments, such as a headache or slight cold, are not acceptable reasons for failing to attend school. Repeated absences may require the school to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery or local pharmacy as recommended by the Government.

If a student fails to achieve 90% attendance and has 10 or more sessions (half days) of unauthorised absence recorded on the attendance register in a given period, a penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority.

I would like to remind you that the current law does not give any entitlement to parents to remove their child from school during term-time for the purpose of a holiday. Headteachers may only grant leave of absence where an application has been made in advance and we consider that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. For those children whose attendance is below 90%, we will be monitoring their attendance patterns and reporting to you on a weekly basis.

We are confident that you will be keen to work with us to ensure that your child meets the new threshold requirements since it is clear that this will have a positive effect on their learning. Please contact me at school if I can help you in any matter relating to your child's attendance.