



North Drive
Sandfield Park
Liverpool
L12 1LE

Head Teacher: Miss K Peaston

admin@runnymede-school.org.uk
www.runnymedestowards.co.uk
0151 281 2300

19th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

School Attendance

We are writing to you about attendance and to provide you with a clear outline about absence procedures and the School and Local Authority responses to poor pupil attendance. The Governors have made it clear that they will support the Head Teacher in promoting high levels of attendance and act where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence.

Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Unacceptable Reasons

- shopping visits
- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- parents'/carers' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Friday and/or Monday)
- parental illness

This list is not exhaustive.

Illness, First Day and subsequent Day's Call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness, you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 08:55am. It is useful if you know the expected day of return. You are required to telephone the morning of every absence due to illness. If you do not supply school with this information, we have a duty to contact you in order that we are sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure.



Runnymede St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Inspire, challenge and support through faith

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Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments, this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns regarding excessive absence patterns through illness, we will need to discuss this with parents/carers in order to ascertain a better understanding of the problems and, of course, to offer support.

Medical/Dental Appointments

We would ask, if at all possible that these be arranged outside school hours. We are aware that this is not always possible. If a morning appointment has been booked, please indicate in advance, if your child will be returning for their mid-day meal. Medical and dental appointments are marked as authorised absences. If available, please email proof of appointment to admin@runnymede-school.org.uk.

Emergency Occasions

We are aware that there can be some occasions, e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc. where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school. We are here to support you and will be sympathetic to such needs.

Lateness

Please ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present for registration; this is carried out at 08:55am each day. Being able to meet and exchange news with friends before school is important for the children's social development. Lateness causes problems with register marking and missed instructions. Gates close at 8:50am.

Leave of Absence

Holidays

Holidays taken during term time will not be authorised. If pupils are absent for holidays during term time, we have a duty of care to report this to the Educational Welfare Service. Where unauthorised leave is taken, the Governing Body have decided that it will support the imposition of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Approved Public Performance/Recognised City Council or National Sporting Event

Where children are invited to perform in a licensed show or concert (e.g. orchestra, pantomime) you are asked to consult with the Designated Attendance Lead about how much time away from school is required. Where



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possible, such requests will be granted provided that the child's attendance is satisfactory. The school will also be sympathetic granting leave to participate in a recognised City, County or National Sporting Event.

What is School Aiming for?

Average attendance should be 97.5% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 98.5%.

What is considered as Poor Attendance?

Attendance below 94% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance falls below 85%, serious concerns will be raised. Below 85% is considered as persistent absence from the DfE. In this school we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 97.5%. At the end of every half term we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90% and contact parents. We then monitor pupils' attendance on a weekly basis. Hopefully a pattern of unbroken weeks will develop.

Duty of Care in responding to unauthorised and persistent absence – possible consequences

School has a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low together with invalid reasons for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents/carers condone absence, e.g. by taking children out of school on an unauthorised holiday, parents/carers render themselves liable to a fine. Your local council can give each parent a fine of £80 per child, rising to £160 if you do not pay within 21 days. This will be doubled to £720 if the fine is unpaid within 21 days and could ultimately lead to a criminal conviction. As school, we do not want this to happen, however, we need to be very clear about the issue.

We hope this will help provide a clear understanding of the School's expectations. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and if you require any further information or help in maintaining your child's attendance, please contact Mrs O'Donnell, Designated Attendance Lead.

Yours sincerely

Mrs P O'Donnell

