

Whiteley Primary School :

Attendance and punctuality

July 2015

Dear Parents/Carers,

Early in 2015, parents were informed that Hampshire County Council had reviewed its 'Code of Conduct' in response to the changes in school attendance law. This code sets out for all schools what actions must be taken for any child with 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence from September 2015. We have been informed that if parents choose to ignore the law and are complicit in their child's absence then all schools with the Local Authority must take legal action through a penalty notice fine or prosecution in court.

From September 2015, all schools will be required to work with Hampshire County Council to take legal action if:

1. A child has unauthorised absence for 10 or more sessions.
2. A child is continually late to school and this lateness is unauthorised for 10 or more sessions.
3. A child has any unauthorised absence during any formal examinations, assessment or testing.

Please note each parent/carer can be issued a separate penalty notice for each child.

The decision to authorise absence is at the school's discretion and only if the criteria of 'exceptional circumstances' (defined as 'rare, significant, unavoidable and short') have been met. Circumstances will vary from school to school as there are no absolute rules on this subject. However, the Henry Cort Cluster of schools have agreed that the following are examples of occasions which meet the criteria of exceptional circumstances:

1. Death of a close family member (mother, father, brother, sister, grandparent).
2. Moving to a new area and planning for a change of school.
3. Parent returning home from a forces deployment.

All of the above circumstances will be dependent on the individual child's overall attendance being good.

Parents are advised not to make any arrangements until the request has been considered. Leave of absence request forms are available from the school and the school website and are dealt with on a weekly basis.

All children must meet certain expectations of punctuality too. If a child arrives later than 9.20am, an 'unauthorised absence' will be recorded for one session. Repeated late arrivals between 8.50 (school start time) and 9.20 can also be recorded as unauthorised, and individual parents will be informed if this becomes an issue.

Finally, we would like to thank all parents and carers who work hard in partnership with school to ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually. We realise that the above information will make no difference to the vast majority of families. However, we would urge parents of children with attendance and punctuality that does not meet expectations to work together with the school on the improvements which need to be made.

Yours sincerely,

Lesley Pennington Headteacher