

Bournville Infant School

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Spotlight on Attendance

A very important message for all parents

9th October 2017

Dear Parent/Carer,

Bournville Infant School is working in partnership with parents to continue to improve our excellent school attendance, which for the last academic year was 97.3%.

Our Attendance Officer is Miss Whittaker who is happy to answer any questions you may have. The information below is for your reference and is taken from the most recent Local Authority guidelines on absence in term time:

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in exams
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006.

You may be aware that Head Teachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional (unavoidable, rare or significant). If your child takes leave that has not been authorised by the Head Teacher, it will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised and legal action may be taken.

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at

school, friendship with peers and support from staff can provide children with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

Legal action that may be taken include:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - court can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, order payment of prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

The Local Authority will take legal action when a pupil has been absent either:

- For a minimum of five school days of unauthorised absence and has had five school days of other unauthorised absence in the previous twelve months; or
- For at least ten school days of unauthorised absence, where there has been no other unauthorised absence in the previous twelve months.

Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.

How does your child compare?

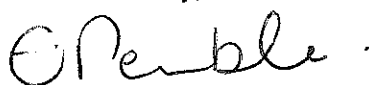
Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning.

If your child's level of absence is of serious concern you will receive another letter advising you about improving attendance. After this, any further unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

We would like to thank the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly and punctually.

Yours faithfully,



Esther Pemble
Head Teacher