

MAYESPARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Attendance

Dear Parents and Carers,

Pupil attendance has started very positively this academic year. Thank you for your help in ensuring that this continues. Good attendance contributes to our children achieving well in their learning. We are also very pleased to report that pupil's punctuality has also improved. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support for your child's education.



As I am sure you are aware, high pupil attendance is key for a child's academic development and their wider wellbeing. The Department for Education (DfE) have recently released a new document in relation to attendance – 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'. It includes parents/carers legal responsibility and how absences affect pupils' school experience and attainment. I note these key points below:



- *"The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school."*
- *Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.*
- *This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At key stage 2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard."*



At Mayespark, we set an individual pupil attendance target of 96%. We appreciate that illness is unavoidable. However, where we have concerns surrounding your child's attendance, we will contact you to explore how we can work in partnership to support, liaising with our Educational Welfare Officer, (EWASS) as needed. Please note that only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence.



As winter approaches there is an increase in the number of children suffering from coughs and colds and minor bugs. Most of these illnesses do not need a prescription, are rarely serious and do not require time away from school. They are part of childhood and are normal as children grow up. Often treating your child's ailment or illness yourself, or with advice and medicines from your pharmacist, can be the quickest and easiest way to deal with it.



Please be aware that the school may not agree to authorise your child's absence for minor illnesses and you have a duty to ensure your child is not absent where this can be avoided.





Holiday requests

I would like to remind all parents that there are 13 weeks available for going on holiday or visiting relations when the school is closed. We do not want you to take your child out of school during term time. Time off of school for family holidays, special events and outings is not a right. The Governing Body of Mayespark Primary School has agreed that any leave of absence will not be authorised during term time. It is not an entitlement and leave taken in term time will adversely affect your daughter's/son's academic progress and their attendance record. Amendments to the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. These circumstances should be declared when applying for leave during term time and will be looked at on a 'case by case' basis. Please be aware that, while many parents believe their own situations are exceptional, there are daily requests to remove children from school and Mrs Davies has to be consistent with her approach to all requests.

In relation to unauthorised holidays specifically, our Attendance Policy does include the use of Fixed Penalty Notices so parents/carers may be at risk of receiving a fine in this situation. The Fixed Penalty is £120 per parent per child. Any requests for leave of absence must be applied for at least 10 days in advance in writing.

Medical appointments

Medical or dental appointments you have made for your child should be outside of school hours or in the holidays. In the case of an emergency appointment, a letter or appointment card from the medical practitioner will need to be seen by the office staff to support your request to take your child out of school. A full day's absence for a medical appointment is usually unnecessary. If your appointment is unavoidably during the day, your child should attend school during the morning/afternoon and be collected in time to go to the appointment. Your child must return to school after their appointment if fit to do so. Authorisation for a child to be taken out of school for a medical appointment needs to be granted by a member of the senior leadership team and not the class teacher or office staff. Parents would need to seek alternative childcare for siblings who are not attending the appointment.

I trust that we will continue to work together to ensure the attendance of all of our pupils is in line with the government's expectation and those of the school's governing body.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Jones
Deputy Head Teacher

