

Dear Parents/Guardians

### **Attendance at Galley Common Infant School**

As you may be aware, the government is concerned with the level of attendance of Primary and Secondary school pupils and schools are required to have strict monitoring systems in place.

Parents and guardians are reminded that under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, 'it is an offence if a parent/guardian fails to secure their child/children's attendance at the school at which they are registered unless the absence has been authorised by the school.'

The DFE (Department for Education) and the ACE (Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Team) gather attendance information from schools every half term. Individual pupils whose attendance is poor are monitored and the school is required to take action. If, following school intervention, attendance does not improve, further action may be taken by the ACE Team and parents may be subject to legal measures.

We therefore need to work constantly together to ensure that attendance is a priority within our school. As sickness is hard to avoid, the main way we can do this is by asking parents to ensure that their children get to school on time, are only off sick when absolutely necessary and do not take holidays during school term-time.

Children only get one chance at school and setting good attendance patterns from an early age helps your child throughout their life. Although it seems a long way off at this age, employers want to recruit people who are reliable and patterns of reliability and responsibility are set at an early age. Parents also have a legal obligation to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

I would like to share with you some facts that show the impact on a child's education when they miss school. During their school life:

- 2 weeks holiday per academic year is the equivalent of a child missing two complete terms of schooling
- Missing 1 day per week equates to 2 years missed schooling
- A child who is 15 minutes late to school each day will miss 1 term of schooling.

As I am sure you will agree these facts are surprising. Whilst as a parent you would not think of taking your child out of school for a complete term, year or 2 years, when taken in smaller units it may seem acceptable, but it is not.

Absences must be covered in the registers by a letter from the parent/guardian.

### **HOLIDAYS**

Holidays at Galley Common Infant School, will not be authorised. However a holiday may be granted in exceptional circumstances at the school's discretion under strict guidelines from the Government and will never be authorised if a child's previous attendance is poor or they are nearing or taking their SATs tests (tests completed during the months of May and June when the children are in Year 2) or Y1 Phonics screen check in June.

Parents/guardians are reminded that they do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for a family holiday. Deposits should **not** be paid until the requested holiday has been agreed with the school and parents should be aware that any holiday taken, which has not been authorised, will be marked as unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Please contact the school before requesting time off for holidays and ensure that you complete the holiday request form at least **6 weeks** prior to your proposed break. Any unauthorised holidays will be referred to the Attendance Compliance Enforcement Team (ACE) and a fine may be given as a result.

### **LATENESS**

Parents/guardians are required by law to ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance at school. Persistent lateness is a serious issue and failure to ensure punctuality can be a prosecutable offence. Moreover, the impact on learning can be severe, especially where, as in Primary schools, morning sessions are aimed at improving key skills.

### **SICKNESS**

If a child is absent from school due to illness, the parent/guardian should contact the school before 10.00am to advise us of the reason for absence. If the school is not advised of the child's absence, the school will contact the names supplied on the pupil contact form to find out the reason for absence. **Please ensure that the school has an up to date contact number at all times.** Upon return to school, the child should bring a letter from the parent/guardian confirming the reason for absence. A reminder letter will be sent home if you forget to send this in.

### **MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

Please note, that whenever possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours.

### **FINES**

The ACE Team will now consider issuing Penalty Notices in cases where a child's attendance has fallen below the level determined as the trigger for legal intervention and it is considered likely that the issue of such a notice will bring about an improvement in attendance.

Notices and fines can also be applied when unauthorised holidays are taken in term time.

The school will investigate patterns of frequent odd days off and if the school is not satisfied that the absence was for genuine medical reasons, they can request medical evidence.

If you have any queries regarding any of the above, please contact the school or the ACE Team on **0844 967 6826**

---

Head Teacher

---

School Governor responsible for  
Attendance