



Great Bardfield Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Alison Kerrell

Tuesday 14th November 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

With attendance at school being a topical issue and much press time having been given to the subject over the last year, I thought I would, as our new school Attendance Policy has just been adopted by the governors, send you a copy and outline two particularly important elements.

Our policy is that as provided by Essex County Council, which evolved from their county wide consultation with governors, teachers, parents and carers. The same policy will be applied across all schools within the county and the principles it contains apply nationally.

The two requirements within the policy which I would particularly like to emphasis are:

1. Punctuality at the start of the day &
2. That there is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.

So firstly, for your own child's sake, but also out of respect for their friends and teachers, it is pertinent that all pupils are in school by 8:50am, ready to register in their classes, to hear their teacher's instructions and be best prepared for the day's learning. Being punctual gives your child the very best chance of being settled, feeling prepared and consequently able to focus on the task in hand. It likewise ensures that every other child in the class has the best chance - arriving late disrupts the the whole class, means instructions and guidance are missed and have to be repeated when the class should already be working and consequently means the learning of the whole class is impacted.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

As I know you will agree, good timekeeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through life and out in to the wider world. The school day starts at 8:50am, so those arriving after 9:00am will be marked as late and may be greeted by our Headteacher or a senior teacher as you sign them in at the school office, when a reason for lateness will be recorded. Where unavoidable, absence for dental or medical appointments should please be supported by an appointment card or letter. Persistent lateness is not acceptable. Arrival after 9:20am is recorded as an unauthorised absence and may ultimately result in a County Council penalty notice. If you find you are facing problems getting to school on time, do please speak to your child's teacher or our Headteacher, at any time and they will be only too happy to see how they might help.

If your child is going to be absent for all or part of the school day please contact the school office before 8:30am and on any subsequent day.

Secondly, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations were amended in September 2013, removing all references to authorising leave for family holidays. It specifies that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and headteachers no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

"Exceptional circumstances" are interpreted by Essex County Council as leave 'being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time.' Additionally, please note that leave will not be agreed even if these exceptional circumstances are met, if it is in September (when the child is settling in to the new academic year), during assessment periods or if any authorised or unauthorised leave has already occurred, in that academic year.

I apologise for writing at such length, but I believe that quite rightly, Great Bardfield school attaches great importance to good attendance, as it gives the children the very best chance of reaching their potential. In this we have a shared responsibility and I am very grateful for your support.

However please read the policy in full and as always, do get in touch with the school or me, should you have any queries.

With kind regards,



Mrs Jane Tillotson
Chair of Governors

