



# Millfield First & Nursery School

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Dear Parents and Carers

## As a school, at Millfield we aim to:

- Maintain an attendance rate of a minimum of 96%.
- Maintain parents', carers' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

In school, attendance has a high profile and is celebrated weekly. Children collaboratively work together with the aim of achieving good or better attendance each week. This letter is to provide information to parents/carers regarding the importance of good attendance and the possible outcomes for poor attendance.

## Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders can make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders can find school routines and learning easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders can find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders can have an easier transfer to their next stage in education.

## As a parent/carer you can help us by:

- Ensuring your child/ren attend/s school unless they are unwell.
- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when your child will return.
- Keeping us updated by telephone, email or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.
- Arranging all medical appointments where possible out of school hours or during school breaks.
- Arranging holidays out of term time.

## Taking children out of school during term time

The law was changed in 2013, which made it clear that head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. You should not take your child/ren out of school during term time unless you are granted authorised leave of absence by the head teacher. If you do take your child out of school without the leave of absence being authorised, the head teacher may direct the Council to take measures to issue either a penalty notice or prosecute you as parents/carers. In certain circumstances, schools may remove the child from the register if leave of absence is taken for an unreasonable amount of time.

## Penalty notices

A penalty notice is a fine issued to parents or carers for their child's unauthorised absence from school by school in partnership with the local authority. A penalty notice is an alternative to being prosecuted under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. **Penalty notices are most often used for unauthorised holidays in term time.** Penalty notices are sent through the post. The penalty notice contains information explaining how and where to pay. All penalty notices will follow guidance from the Hertfordshire Code of Conduct (Feb 2016).



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### Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued:

Note: 1 session absence = half a school day

- Penalty notices will only be issued for pupils of **compulsory school age**.
- Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of **unauthorised absence**.
- The pupil must have **at least 15 sessions** unauthorised absence in the **current and/or previous term**.
- The school must have sent a **formal warning** to the parents/carers.
- The school or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could **avoid further absence**.
- A **maximum of two** separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any twelve month period.

Warning letters will be issued by school to parents/carers to inform you of any concerns regarding the attendance of your child/ren.

### The letters may be sent for the following reasons:

- **Poor attendance:** This is classified as anything below 95%. As a school, we are fully aware that absences can occur due to medical needs and understand the reasons for this. Although, we understand that illness is unavoidable, it is important that young people miss as little school as possible to minimise the impact on their learning and social development.
- **Unauthorised absence:** If a period of absence reaches 10 sessions, a warning letter will be sent home. If this form of absence increases within the same or next term a 15 session penalty notice letter will be sent home and the local authority informed.
- **10 day absence reporting:** 10 consecutive days of absence which is unauthorised will result in a letter being sent home and the local authority informed.

I would like to take this opportunity to share that, on average, our school attendance is 95%. Although, we are proud of this attendance rate, as always, we endeavour to improve. We appreciate your on-going support and commitment to Millfield First & Nursery School.

Yours sincerely

Laura Kennedy-Weeks  
Headteacher



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