



September 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

As you will be aware, children have a better chance to achieve their best if they attend school regularly. A few absences can quickly add up to a significant loss in learning time. For example, a child who ends the year with 95% attendance has been absent from school for the equivalent of 10 full days. Dorset Council is committed to ensuring the highest possible attendance level for every child.

Notifying the school if your child is absent

If your child is going to be absent from school, please telephone the school office on the morning of the first day of absence and every other day thereafter. Ideally, the absence should be reported before 9:30am and a reason given for the absence. Monitoring of attendance is an important part of our safeguarding procedures.

Monitoring attendance

Children's attendance is routinely monitored and reviewed on a regular basis. Parents will usually be contacted if a child's attendance drops below 95%. When a child has attendance below 90%, the parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss how we can work together to improve attendance. Wimborne First School has an Attendance Worker assigned by the Local Authority and is available to give guidance and support to the school and families.

Requests for absence during term time

In line with the current legislation, Headteachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. The following situations could be considered as exceptional circumstances: religious observance, a family wedding of a close relative, or an educational purpose (fixed date sporting or music exams). Exceptional circumstances are rare, significant, unavoidable and short; 'unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled another time.

On most occasions, the following scenarios cannot be considered 'exceptional':

- Family holidays and breaks
- Parents' profession or place of work making it difficult to align school and work holidays
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time

- Family birthdays or other events

Any request for a leave of absence should be submitted to school using the Leave of Absence form, which can be found on the school website or a copy can be collected from the office. Following an application for term time absence, parents/carers will be notified of the Headteacher's decision. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional, it is possible that a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued. FPN's are requested in line with the current guidance from the Local Authority and are issued on a 'per parent, per child' basis.

Lateness

Punctuality is also important, as lateness disrupts learning, not only for the child arriving late, but also for the children in the class they join. School starts at **8.50am** and the register closes at **9.00am** after which a child will be marked as late (L) and will need to be signed in at the school office. Pupils who arrive later than **9.10am** will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U). If your child is persistently late, we will contact you to discuss this.

If pupils are to achieve their full potential, they need to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Kind regards

Mrs Kelly Fletcher
Assistant Headteacher