

26 September 2019

## **Pupil Attendance**

Dear Parent(s)/Carer(s)

The Governors and Senior Management Team are becoming increasingly concerned at the number of absence requests. We take this issue very seriously and it is important to us that we engage parents in a partnership to tackle this issue. With this in mind, we will first set out clearly what our policy is, and then explain some of the reasons for the policy in the hope that this will persuade you to make a commitment to reducing our rate of unauthorised absences.

### **The Policy**

We would like to make it clear to parents that absence from school (other than sickness) will not be authorised except in the most exceptional circumstances.

Examples of exceptions include;

Compassionate reasons (full details must be given)

Hospital or other similar appointments where there is no choice of time - it does not include routine dental checks.

Educational reasons. For example, an entrance exam.

Certain specific circumstances where holiday cannot be taken at the normal time. For example, a parent in the armed forces (again full details must be given).

Authorisation is at the discretion of the Headteacher, in consultation with the Governors and that decision is final.

### **Why is it important?**

First of all, we believe that rules should be followed. Creating a culture of respect for rules is a vital part of educating children so that they develop into good citizens, and make a positive contribution to society. If this culture is not reinforced by parents and extended family, then our job is made harder, and ultimately, we all suffer.

Absences, even for one day, can have a detrimental effect on a child's education. All of us can probably remember from our own childhood a day when we missed the first explanation of a new topic, or an exciting activity which would have helped us understand a difficult concept. Obviously, the teaching staff will always do their best to help a child to catch up on missed work, but this places an additional burden on them, and none of us want to add to our overstretched teachers' workload unnecessarily.

Absences due to dental and non-urgent doctor's appointments should be arranged outside school hours where possible as leaving or arriving part way through the day causes disruption to lessons.

Our absence rate is one of the indicators that OFSTED take into account when giving a school its overall grading. If the rate is too high, it is unlikely that the school will achieve the highest grade. Whilst this is not the only important measure of a school, it nevertheless represents our public profile, and can be seen as a reflection on the wider community.

Finally, an individual pupils' absence record is part of their official record and it can be legitimately examined in the course of an educational appeal. A poor record could be a relevant factor in determining the outcome of such an appeal.

### **Requests for Absence**

Starting from Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September, if you wish to request a leave of absence you will need to complete a 'Leave of Absence Request Form' which can be found under the 'Communication' tab of the website or from the School Office (a copy has been attached for your information). These will need to be completed at least a week before the absence takes place and must be completed for all absences, including medical appointments.

### **Reporting Illness**

If your child is ill, please continue to inform us by calling the absence line (01869 277268 option 1), emailing [absence@marshgibbon.bucks.sch.uk](mailto:absence@marshgibbon.bucks.sch.uk) or via Parentmail. This must be done by 9:30am.

We very much hope that you will feel able to co-operate fully with us in this area, as you do in so many others.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



Mr Paul Alford  
Headteacher