



West Melton Primary School
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Expectations & Promoting Excellent Attendance at West Melton Primary School

Dear Parent or Carer,

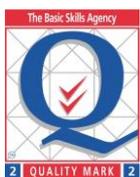
Attending a 'good or better' school on a regular, punctual basis is one of THE most important ways of making sure your child gets off to the best possible start in life. The Primary schools that form the Wickersley Partnership Trust are committed to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality as they know that it is essential for children to achieve and be successful.

Today, I am writing to remind you of our expectations of attendance and punctuality and explain recent important changes to the Local Authority 'Code of Conduct' for the issuing of 'Fixed Penalty Notices' and in turn our school attendance policy.

Attendance really DOES matter. Never underestimate the importance of 100 % attendance. Even one day missed can have an effect on learning:

- **98 %** attendance means **4** school days missed
- **95 %** attendance means **10** school days missed
- **90 %** attendance means **19** school days missed
- **80 %** attendance means **38** school days missed
- **Five minutes** late each day means **3** school days missed

As you are all well aware, there has been proven link between attendance and the attainment and progress of children in school. We advise that your child attends school every day unless there is a genuine reason for absence ie; sickness or ill health, religious observance, a family emergency or an essential medical appointment.



Medical appointments taken in school time also impacts on your child's attendance. If possible, we would ask that these appointments be made out of school time too.

Holidays taken 'during term time' are never authorised (except in 'exceptional circumstances'). The Law (Government) has made it clear that Head Teachers are NOT to authorise absence for any holidays during term time, except under 'exceptional circumstances'. Exceptional circumstances does not involve cheaper holiday costs, family availability or better weather conditions!

If you feel there are 'exceptional circumstances' why your child needs to be absent from school during term time, you should apply, in advance, by writing to the school explaining clearly the dates and reasons you are requesting the 'leave of absence'. If the school refuses a request for 'leave of absence' and the child is still taken out of school this will be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence' and noted in the child's attendance record.

Over the Summer break, the Local Authority has revised its '*Code of Conduct*' for the issuing of '*Fixed Penalty Notices*' which came into force from 1st September 2018. The major changes to the '*Code of Conduct*' for the issuing of '*Fixed Penalty Notices*' states that:

- A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued for holidays in term time when a child's attendance falls below the **national average percentage** which is currently 95.3% (2016-2017).
- The time period considered has also been amended **to include the holiday period** and the previous 12 months attendance. This means that if you take your child on a holiday during term time and they total nine days or more absence during the previous 12 month period, that will not only impact significantly on your child's attendance and education, but may well mean that a 'Fixed Penalty Notice' (fine) will be issued.
- The Local Authority can now also issue a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice) for children whose parent(s) do not complete a school request form for a '**leave of absence**' providing they meet the criteria for taking a holiday during term time which is defined as - "The deliberate taking of a holiday/leave of absence in term time without the school's permission where this has created a period of unauthorised absence of at least 10 sessions (just five school days).

I must also remind you of the importance of punctuality with regards to the beginning of the school day. You will be aware of the school's session start times when ALL children are expected to be on school premises by this time.

If you do have any concerns, or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact school at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

L Norris

Head teacher

Mr. A Jessop
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