



# Airedale Junior School

## 'Aspire - Believe - Achieve'

Headteacher: Miss K Robinson

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Dear Parent/Guardian

11<sup>th</sup> June 2017

### **Re: Attendance and Punctuality**

Research shows that regular attendance at school coupled with prompt arrival has a significant effect on children's educational attainment. I am therefore issuing the following information to confirm the procedures for all matters relating to attendance as a reminder.

#### **Punctuality**

We have recently seen an increase in the number of children arriving late to school. As well as being quite disruptive to the class, the child will miss important information at the start of the lesson. Pupils should be present in class at the beginning of registration, entering through the children's year group entrance doors before 9am. Those who arrive after 9am but before the close of register at 9:05, who enter through main reception will be given a late mark (L). Pupils arriving after the close of registration at 9:20am will be marked as unauthorised absent. (U)

When a child receives more than 10 unauthorised absence marks in an academic year, they will then be referred to our Education Welfare Officer who will then consider a penalty notice to parents at £60 per parent per child, which if not paid could lead to parental prosecution.

#### **Holidays in term time**

Recently the law in relation to holidays in term time was reviewed, where it was decided that the law has been upheld from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, when the new DfE (Department for Education) regulations about taking children out of school during term time came into force. This means that headteachers are only able to authorise a leave of absence during term time in **exceptional** circumstances.

#### **Holidays will NOT be authorised for the following:**

- Availability of cheap holidays/desired accommodation
- Overlap with beginning and end of term

Where you believe that your request is exceptional then applications must be made to the headteacher 14 days in advance of the absence starting. These requests will be considered in line with Government guidelines.

I appreciate that many people may have already booked term time holidays prior to this information being shared again. If this is the case and proof of booking dated prior to this letter is provided, then these will be accepted. I hope all this makes the new regulations clear to you and helps you in any decision making or holiday booking process in the near future.



## **Absences**

A child's absence from school is sometimes unavoidable due to illness or hospital appointments. If your child has a hospital appointment; a copy of the appointment letter should be provided to the school office. Non urgent appointments at the doctors or dentists should be made outside school hours if at all possible.

**The first day absence** should be reported to the school office by 8.55am by phone, in person or by email to [headteacher@airedale-jun.wakefield.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@airedale-jun.wakefield.sch.uk) . If a message has not been received by 9:20am the school office will contact the parents to ascertain a reason for absence. If no reason for absence is provided then the absence is marked as unauthorised.

## **Categorisation of absence**

**Authorised** - this is an absence that has been authorised by the headteacher (e.g bereavement, illness, exceptional circumstances).

**Unauthorised** - this is an absence that has not been authorised and includes absences for which no reason has been given or family holidays taken during term time.

## **Monitoring attendance and punctuality**

Unauthorised attendance patterns will be monitored on a regular basis including lateness. If a child's attendance falls below 90% and/or there are persistent levels of lateness, parents will receive a letter informing them that their child's attendance is causing concerns and needs to improve.

If following this there is still no improvement parents will be invited to attend a meeting (Fast Track Review Meeting) with the Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

## **Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices**

In accordance with the DfE (Department for Education) regulations which came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, there may be occasions when it becomes necessary to inform the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. These can be issued in the following circumstances:

- No improvement following a Fast Track Review Meeting
- Attendance falls below 90%
- Inappropriate condoned parental absence (including truancy)
- Unauthorised absences (including holidays taken in term time) which result in 10 or more sessions being missed during the current term, or over a six month period. (A session equates to  $\frac{1}{2}$  day)
- Persistent late arrivals

The cost of a penalty notice is £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days. If it is paid after this, but before 28 days then the cost increases to £120 per parent, per child. Please note these fines are issued and receipted by Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and if the Local Authority do not receive payment within the 28 days the matter will be referred to the Magistrates Court.

**I do appreciate the reasons why holidays may wish to be taken during term time and I have always resisted the Penalty Notice process, but it is no longer my decision to take and I must comply with DfE regulations. I hope this has clarified the procedures for all matters relating to attendance.**

**Yours sincerely**

K Robinson  
Headteacher