



10th September 2021

Dear Parents/ Carers

Here at St Mary's Junior School we want to ensure every child has the best chance to be successful and we therefore value high attendance. Good school attendance habits are best started early. Children learn from those around them and you as parents/carers set the standards and expectations for your child. Showing your child the importance of attending school every day not only helps your child to settle quickly when starting school but helps them to keep and maintain friendships and enjoy the school environment.

Research evidence has always shown that one of the key factors affecting outcomes for children is attendance and in February 2015 the DfE published the results of its own research. One of the main findings of this was that:

'Primary school pupils with no absence were around 1.5 times more likely to achieve the expected level and 4.5 times more likely to achieve above the expected level than pupils that missed 15 to 20%.' 20% is the equivalent of one day per week.

As a result of changes to the law in 2015, Hampshire County Council reviewed its Code of Conduct and this was revised in March 2020.

This code sets out for all Hampshire schools what actions must be taken for any child with 10 or more sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence. We are clear in our code of conduct that where a child or family requires support to achieve attendance rates above 90% that this is the first priority for schools. We are also clear that where parent/carers choose to ignore the law and are complicit in their child's absence then all schools within the Local Authority must take legal action through a penalty notice, fine or prosecution in court.

Further advice and guidance for parent/carers with respect to this is available via the county website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/behaviour-attendance-parents>

In the light of these changes, both schools agreed to adopt the Hampshire County Council form - 'Request to authorise leave of absence from school'. We also have a shared Attendance Policy, again based on the Hampshire County Council model, to ensure there is common agreement around expectations of attendance and the schools' and the families' roles in promoting good attendance.

We are sending this policy out to all parents as we begin the new school year to ensure you are all fully informed. Throughout Hampshire all schools are working to improve levels of attendance and we hope that you will be supportive of our efforts to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for your children through promoting high levels of attendance.

We anticipate the school will be running closer to 'normal' this year when compared with last year and the expectation of attendance is as it was prior to Covid-19. There are some minor changes that are still in place related to recording isolation absences related to COVID19.

Should you have any questions or queries regarding the policy please do not hesitate to contact me and I will be happy to discuss this with you further.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs T McCarley
Head Teacher
Old Basing Infant School

Ms C Welch
Head Teacher
St Mary's Junior School