



Baston CE Primary School

16th December 2015

Dear Parents and Carers

We all know of the detrimental effect that absence from school can have on a child's educational progress and attainment, but I understand that it can sometimes be difficult for parents to see just how quickly absence from school mounts up. Since September we have had 118 sessions (59 days) of unauthorised absence, whether due to family holidays or unexplained pupil absence. Did you know that over a five year period a child whose attendance is at 90%, will actually miss half of a school year? I am sure that you will agree that that's a lot of lost education!

The Department for Education has set a new challenge for school attendance by further raising the level at which a child is deemed to be persistently absent. From September 2015 the term 'persistent absentee' applies to any pupil whose attendance falls to 90% or below.

We analyse our school attendance data on a weekly basis and we have developed a clear procedure, in line with government expectations, which we hope can offer families the support you need to secure good levels of attendance. The stages of this procedure are outlined below * *copies of the letters and Attendance Support Plan are attached at the end of my letter and can also be found on our website underneath the 'Information for Parents/Attendance' tab.*

Stage 1: Absence of child falls to 95% - Parents notified in writing* and asked to ensure child attends school with no further absence in order to get attendance level back over the 95% marker.

Stage 2: Absence of child falls to 90% - Child now considered 'persistently absent'. Parents are notified in writing* and asked to come in to school to meet with the headteacher to put together an Attendance Support Plan* (ASP). Targets are set and future meetings are held to ensure attendance improves.

Stage 3: Absence of child continues to fall or remains below 90%, despite actions agreed in ASP put in place at Stage 2. A further meeting is held and may include additional support from an Education Services Partner from Lincolnshire County Council.

Stage 4: In the event of extremely low attendance and having followed the steps above, a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) may be issued by Lincolnshire County Council (see Code of Conduct from LCC on our website).

In simple terms, a child's absence will fall to below the 90% marker if he/she accumulates up to 19 days absence over an academic year.

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I think that, as with all things, a common sense approach is needed when it comes to school attendance. In the event of a child being absent due to an operation or Chickenpox, for example, the procedure would not run, as one would hope to see the attendance level rise naturally upon his/her return to school.

However, holidays during term time can never be authorised. Our policy clearly states that only exceptional absence from school can be authorised. This policy can be found on our school website. In the event that you choose to request absence from school, a letter will be sent to you warning you of a potential Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). If the holiday goes ahead, it WILL be recorded as unauthorised absence and this can trigger a second letter resulting in a FPN.

So, what's the good news?

We are going to support parents further in maintaining high levels of attendance by trialling a new system where we reduce the 48-hour clearance time following sickness down to 24 hours. This will take effect from January 2016. In the event that this results in more sickness widespread, we reserve the right to revert to our 48-hour policy.

We are going to continue to celebrate high levels of attendance through 100% certificates at the end of each term and the year.

We are also going to include a separate attendance summary in your child's annual report, so you are aware of the attendance details relating to your child.

I have no doubt that in us all working together we can give our children the education they deserve by securing high levels of attendance. Of course, this may mean that you are hearing from me more often than you would like, but I know you will appreciate that this is a government-led statutory measure.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via the school office.

Kind regards



Mrs R Mills
Headteacher