



Somerset County Council



Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery

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Headteacher: Mrs Honoria Thompson

"Where Children Come First."

Today's Date

Dear Parents and Carers

Attendance and Punctuality update

As most of you will realise, attendance and punctuality are an important part of school life and there are national rules insisting that children come to school regularly (it is actually against the law for a child to be out of school when they are able to attend).

Of course we do understand that there may be some occasions when your child cannot attend school – for example if they are ill – but it is important that absences are not treated lightly as they are still missing valuable education. These instances should be rare and I hope you understand the need for us to make you aware of your child's attendance level.

Holidays in term time or family trips out are not acceptable as reasons for missing school. This is important not just for the children that miss school but also for their classmates. This is because teachers have to take time helping absent pupils to catch up on their return, which reduces the amount of time available for the rest of the class. As well as missing their education, friendships can also be affected when children are absent from school.

Our attendance target for last year was 96%. Our actual end of year attendance data was 94.6%. Once again we have set ourselves the challenging target for 2017-18 of **96%** and ask for your help in making sure we reach it as a matter of high importance, to help both your child and the other children in their class.

Ofsted inspectors look very closely at the link between attendance and pupil progress and class any child whose attendance is below 90% as a persistent absentee. We aim for every child to meet this target, as good attendance and punctuality have a very positive impact on children's achievement and enjoyment.

Punctuality is monitored each week, so please make every effort to ensure that your child is at school in time for an **8.55am** start every morning. Children can enter their class from **8.45am** onwards.

If your child is late for school then you risk this being classified as an unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absences can place you at risk of a fine, or even prosecution.

Requests for leave of absence/holidays for your child

Please note that the government has regulated that schools do not authorise any leave for families wishing to book holidays, so we ask please that you do not take holidays during the school term time. Any requests for absence must be submitted in writing to me. However, absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances (strict guidance for exceptional circumstances is set out by the government, for example weddings and funerals for close relatives) and if your child has had a previous history of good attendance.

PTO

Web: www.sheptonmalletinfants.co.uk

VAT Registered Number: 131254412



Advance request for exceptional leave during term time

If you wish to request a leave of absence for exceptional leave for your child, please place this in writing to me in advance (giving as much notice as possible).

You should also be aware that if the exceptional leave is agreed, your child will be expected to return to school immediately afterwards. There is no automatic right to leave in term time and parents should not book tickets in advance. Any extra time taken will be classified as unauthorised absence. If you take your child on leave without authorisation, the Local Authority has the power to issue a penalty notice of £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days or rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. If payment is not received, the matter will be referred to court.

Illness

If your child is ill two days either side of a holiday period, you will be asked to provide medical evidence for the absence to be authorised. The medical evidence could be, for example, an appointment slip, prescription or note from the doctor.

Medical appointments

Please try to make routine GP and dental appointments outside the school hours of 8.55am to 3.15pm.

Thank you for your continuing support with this important matter.

Yours sincerely,



Honoria Thompson
Headteacher

