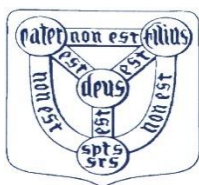


Shellingford CE (A) Primary School

Headteacher: Miss Judith Terrell



"Inspiring hearts and minds"

School Attendance Information for Parents

Why is it important for children not to miss school?

We all want the best for our children and for them to get on well in life. Having a good education is important to ensure that they have the best opportunities in their adult life.

If children arrive late to school, are taken out for appointments within the school day, or do not attend school regularly they may:

- Struggle to keep up with school work. In a busy school day it is difficult for staff to find extra time to help a child catch up.
- Miss out on the social side of school life. Poor attendance can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships; a vital part of growing up.

Setting good attendance patterns from an early age at primary school will help your child later on in their life. Children who have a poor attendance record may have less chance of securing a job when they are adults.

Being on time is also vital. Arriving late at school in the morning can be very disruptive for your child, their teacher and the other children in the class. Some parents may be finding it difficult to ensure their child attends school regularly. If this is the case, please speak to Miss Terrell as soon as possible so that the situation can be addressed

What might the impact of poor attendance be on your child?

In primary schools less than 65% of children achieve good results in English and Maths with an average of 15 days absence a year, compared to 90% where the average is less than 8 days absence from school. Parents can be very surprised at how quickly their children can accumulate 15 days absence within a year.

Research has also shown that children who are not in school can be vulnerable. For example, parents who let their children play truant are more likely to be drawn into crime.

What does the law say?

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must receive suitable, full-education. As a parent you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or any other alternative provision arranged for them which provide full-time education.

Once your child is registered at a school or at alternative provision you are responsible for making sure he or she attends regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly (even if they miss school without you knowing) the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you.

The LA is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities.

If you think you need to take your child out of school, discuss the reasons with Miss Terrell as soon as possible.

Reasons such as close family weddings and bereavement or taking part in an agreed religious observance would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school include family holidays, birthdays, shopping or days out.

Parents who persist in booking family holidays during school terms times are closely monitored.

What happens if your child does not attend school regularly?

You child's school is responsible by law for reporting poor attendance to the LA. As a parents you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly.

You may run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice or being taken to court.

The LA may decide to prosecute the parent. If this happens:

- Parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure their child attends school regularly;
- Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that the parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, such as a parenting class.

What about authorised absence?

There may be times when your child has to miss school because she or he is ill. This is to be expected and you must contact the School Office 9.25am to explain the illness.

Children may also have to attend hospital clinics in school time. The school will ask for a copy of the hospital appointment in order to authorise the absence.

Routine medical appointments or dentist check-ups should not be arranged during the school day.

Any absence must be requested as far in advance as possible. Absences can only be authorised by the Headteacher.

If you are ill, or you have an urgent appointment to attend, or your car breaks down, it is important that your child still attends school. Many families at the school are willing to help take your child to school.

What can you do to help?

- If your child is ill or absent for any reasons, contact the school by 9.25am on the first day of absence.
- Always let the school know of any days that your child is unable to attend and explain the reason.
- Discuss with your child's teacher if you think there are particular reasons why your child may not want to come

to school, such as friendship issues or problems with school work.

- Make sure your child arrives at school on time (by 8.45am). Allow sufficient time to get ready in the morning.
- Take an interest in your child's education and ask them about their school day. Praise and encourage their achievements at school.

Every day counts:

Attending school every day = 100% attendance

Attending school 4 days a week = 80% attendance = more than half a term missed per year

An average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school career adds up to missing a whole 2 years from school.

Every minute counts:

Being late for school reduces learning time.

If your child is 5 minutes late every day they will miss three days of learning each year.

If your child is 15 minutes late every day they will miss two weeks of learning each year.