

ST. BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



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Headteacher Mr M Phillips

Date : 11th November 2022

Dear Parents / Carers,

I am writing to you today on the subject of attendance. We will be working alongside an Education Welfare Officer (EWO), Mr Joe Farrell, to ensure that our attendance improves as it has been identified as an issue in our school. Mr Farrell is coming into school on Monday to do an assembly to explain his job role to the children and impress on them how important it is to have the best attendance possible. Last year, our school was in the lowest 20% of all schools nationally for attendance, which the governors are extremely concerned about.

We are trying very hard to have as many incentives as possible to encourage children to be in school. For example, we have a weekly Friday assembly in which we announce the attendance of every class for that week and celebrate the winning class. All children with 100% for the week are then invited to have a 'dip in the box' to pick a small prize. As you know we also include the weekly figures on the newsletter so please celebrate with your child if their class wins. Then at the end of each term, children with 96% and above are presented with a special certificate and receive a treat eg a film in the school hall. Children with 100 % attendance will be presented with a medal and £10 cash at the end of the summer term.

We need your help and support to ensure that attendance is a priority. Good attendance is vital for children to do well in school and many studies have linked poor attendance to poor attainment in school – something which impacts negatively on children's life chances in the future. We all want to ensure that our children have the brightest possible futures and the best possible life chances, and primary school is the place where that starts. Having good attendance also shows the children how important this is as a life habit in preparation for their future in the workplace. Poor attendance is also considered a safeguarding issue as parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

I just want to clarify the systems which are now in place to drive improvements in our attendance and punctuality figures.

On the first day of illness, a parent needs to call school to notify them of their child's absence and to give the reason for the absence. This cannot be 'illness' or 'sick'. It must be specific – vomiting bug, high temperature, earache etc

If a parent does not call school, our first day response is to call the parent to request a reason for the absence. All absences are recorded with the reason given. If we are concerned about

the child's attendance, we may call to the house or request that Mr Farrell, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) calls to the house.

If your child's attendance falls to below 95% you will now be sent a letter to advise you of this.

If your child's attendance falls to 90% or below, this is called 'persistent absenteeism'. You will receive a letter from school to tell you your child's attendance figures. You may receive a visit from the school EWO.

If your child continues to have an attendance which is 90% or below, we will invite you to school to attend an Attendance Panel meeting to see how we can support you in improving your child's attendance.

Unfortunately, as of two years ago, Headteachers are not allowed to authorise holidays during school term time. Holidays during school time are marked as 'Not Authorised'. All holidays of **10 sessions (5 days) or more in one term, or 18 sessions (9 days) across two consecutive terms** will automatically receive a fixed term penalty notice.

All children coming to school after 9am will need to sign their child into school giving the reason for them being late. All late minutes are logged on our computer system. The children settle to work as soon as they come into school, doing activities which support their progress, therefore if they are missing these activities because they are five minutes late each morning, it will have an impact on their learning and on the progress they make. Five minutes late each morning over a two week period means that they will lose almost an hour of valuable learning time.

Please remember that if you need to speak to the school nurse about an issue which affects your child's attendance, just ask myself, or contact the school office and we know and we can arrange a meeting. If you are experiencing other problems, please let us know and we will work with you as best we can to support you in getting your child into school on time and ready to learn

Here is a link to Sefton Council's Penalty Charge Notice Code of Conduct:

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/1116/penalty-charge-notice-code-of-conduct-sefton.pdf>

Yours sincerely

Mr M Phillips
Headteacher