

Witley C of E Infant School

'Love, learn and flourish together'



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Headteacher: Mrs H Szczepanski BA Hons, PGCE

9th September 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

ATTENDANCE COUNTS – New DfE Statutory Guidance

Earlier this summer the DfE revealed plans to improve school attendance across England and as a result new statutory guidance, *Working together to improve school attendance*, was implemented on 19th August 2024. This new guidance now means that parents/carers in England may face higher fines if their children are taken out of school without permission i.e. unauthorised absence.

Please note that requests for holidays (unauthorised absence) that the school received prior to 19th August for the autumn term 2024 will not incur penalty notices.

What does this mean for our parents/carers?

Parents/carers who take their children out of school without authority i.e. holiday requests, for 5 or more days (which do not have to be consecutive), may be liable to receive a penalty notice.

Currently the amount payable under a penalty notice is £80.00 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days. Thereafter, the amount increases to £160.00 if paid between 21 and 28 days. If the penalty notice remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority will consider a prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Please note that penalty notices are issued per parent/carer per child so a family of two parents and two children will receive 4 penalty notices.

Surrey County Council is not responsible for authorising pupil absence and therefore cannot withdraw any Penalty Notice requests without the written permission of the Headteacher.

Responding to lateness

Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time.

We encourage parents to ensure their children arrive on time for school in order to access class early bird activities. The classroom doors open at 8:45am and the register is taken at 8:55am. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register, they should be brought to the main office so they can be recorded as being present. Children will be recorded as being late if they arrive after 8:55am but before 9.25am, when the registers close. Any child arriving after 9.25am, without a valid explanation, will be recorded as late after close of register and this denotes an unauthorised absence.



GODALMING LEARNING PARTNERSHIP



Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral may be made to the Inclusion Service.

Children should be collected at 3:15pm. If children are not collected by 3:20pm they will be taken to the office and parents telephoned. Parents/Carers will be asked to sign their child out in the late collection book.

Further information

At Witley School we pride ourselves on our good attendance and our children rarely miss school because of unauthorised absences. Our target attendance for the whole school is 95% which we achieved last academic year. I'd like to thank all of our families who have supported the school in ensuring children attend school regularly.

Moving forward parents/carers will need to carefully consider the amount of time they request for holidays/other unauthorised absences to avoid penalty notices.

As always, please do come and speak with me if you have any queries regarding planned absences.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Szczepanski', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Helen Szczepanski
Headteacher