Supporting Your Child's Attendance

Academic year 2018-2019

Attendance

- As a general rule, we expect all children to attend school at least 95% of the time.
- We monitor the attendance of all children, because good attendance is important for everyone. However, attendance at school becomes statutory in the term after a child's 5th birthday. This is when the local authority also begin to monitor a child's attendance.
- Where children have good attendance from a young age, there is evidence to show that they make better progress at school than their peers with poor attendance, and attain more throughout their education.

What is authorised and unauthorised absence?

- Authorised absence is when a child is absent from school for a reason which the school accepts is necessary and genuine, for example, illness, attending a medical appointment or a funeral

- Unauthorised absence is when a child is absent for school for reasons which the school believe could be avoided, for example, a family holiday

Why is good attendance important?

- Research shows that children with good attendance make the most progress with their learning – children with at least 95% attendance are much more likely to achieve grades A-C at GCSE than those with attendance lower than 95%
- Good attendance is necessary to enable children to make friends and develop their social skills
- Children with good attendance feel happy and secure in their routines and tend to enjoy school much more than those with poor attendance

Punctuality

- It is also very important to be at school on time. The bell goes at 8:53 to remind children to line up, then children go into school to start learning at 8:55. Anyone arriving after 8:55 is late.
- Being late for school is very stressful for you and for your child – it is not a good way to start the day!
- Learning time starts as soon as children come into school, so if your child is even a few minutes late, they miss out on learning. If you are frequently late to school, the minutes your child misses of learning can add up to hours or even days!

What is a ‘holiday in term time’?

- This means any time out of school for a holiday, either in the middle of term time, or at the beginning or end of a school holiday.

- This will almost always be an unauthorised absence.

What happens if I want to take my child on holiday during term time?

- An application ***must*** be made to the school, detailing where and when you will be going
- If you believe there is a reason which justifies the need to take the holiday during term time, this must also be detailed on the form
- Ms Maxwell/Terry will decide on whether or not to authorise the holiday. It is extremely rare for any holiday in term time to be agreed, it would have to be an exceptional reason.
- If the holiday is not authorised, a referral will be made by the school to Tower Hamlets Attendance Welfare Service when the child returns to school, and parents will be fined

When are parents fined?

- Holidays lasting more than 3 school days (6 sessions)

OR

- A combination of 20 ‘lates’ and unauthorised absences

Fines for lateness/unauthorised absence

- Where a child has 20 late marks, unauthorised absences, or a combination of the two over the course of a term, parents will be issued with a fine.

- The family will be referred to the Tower Hamlets Attendance Welfare Service, who will issue a penalty charge notice.

Who issues the fines?

- The school makes a referral to the Local Authority's Attendance Welfare Service (AWS)
- AWS issue the fine (fixed penalty notice or FPN) and enforce payment
- FPNs are a central government initiative and are issued in all local authorities in England

What are the rules for fixed penalty notices?

- Each parent is issued with a £60 fine for each child of statutory school age (over the age of 5)
- Parents not living in the child's home will still be fined as long as they have parental responsibility
- The fine must be paid within 21 days or it will double to £120
- If the fine is still not paid, parents can be taken to court, which could result in a criminal record, as well as court fees plus the maximum fine

What if I want to appeal the FPN?

- Parents have no right of appeal once they have been issued with an FPN
- If there is additional evidence to suggest that the holiday (or extension of the holiday into term time) was unavoidable, this must be shown first to school
- If school still do not agree to authorise the absence, parents can write to the head of the AWS, David Hough, and submit their evidence to him
- David will then consider whether the FPN can be withdrawn

What else might happen if I take a holiday in term time?

- If you have not informed the school where and when you are going, your child may be considered missing and a referral made to social services
- Your child may fall into the category of having persistent absence and their attendance will then be monitored by the local authority for the rest of the year
- You may be required to meet with the Attendance Welfare Advisor

What happens if my child misses school?

- They miss lessons and learning experiences which will not be repeated – this can result in them falling behind in their learning (please note that teachers ***will not*** give work to be completed at home/on holiday)
- They may miss out on trips or special events
- They may find that things have changed within their class/friendship group when they return, which can result in them feeling left out or isolated

Remember:

good attendance =
good learning
strong friendships
a happy child!