This booklet has been compiled as a guide to attendance for all parents with children of compulsory school age on roll at Dormansland Primary School. This follows a change to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations (2013), and the latest legislation from the DfE on Pupil Attendance (December 2015).

It states that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Sarah Stokes
February 2016

1. WHAT DOES REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MEAN?

Regular attendance means that your child must:

- attend school every day unless there are justifiable reasons.
- arrive at school on time (8.50am) in correct uniform and fully prepared for the day ahead.

2. WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY CHILD’S ATTENDANCE?

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. Parents have a legal duty to ensure regular school attendance and failure to do so may mean committing an offence under sections 7 & 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Children must attend regularly if they are to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance leads to an educational disadvantage.

There is a direct correlation between high absence and low attainment, as well as the impact this has on a child’s future employment prospects.

If your child starts missing school then you must:

- make early contact with the school in order for us to be aware that there is a potential problem
- help the school to put things right
- make sure that your child understands that you are doing all you can to ensure the absence is as short as possible and that s/he will be back to school soon.

Please remember that, during the academic year, your child is at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days. Therefore, s/he must not be kept away from school for such reasons as:

- looking after others at home
- visiting relatives
- meeting relatives or family friends from the airport/taking them to the airport
- taking long weekends
- shopping trips
- birthday treats
- accompanying a parent on a business trip
3. WHAT IS CLASSED AS A GOOD ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE?

Government research shows that the recommended minimum level of attendance is 95% and anything below this is likely to impact on a child’s academic attainment.

We are advised by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to challenge any percentage below 93%. If your child’s attendance percentage drops below this threshold then Dormansland Primary School reserves the right to request medical evidence for any future absences.

Parents will also be invited along to school attendance panel meetings to discuss issues that may be preventing their child from attending.

4. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS TOO UNWELL TO ATTEND SCHOOL?

The last thing we want to do is to force a child to come to school if s/he is feeling severely unwell. We completely appreciate that there may be times when your child is just too unwell to attend school and it is for you to use your parental judgement in such cases.

You must ensure that you contact the school office on the first day of absence and any day following a weekend if your child continues to be absent, by either calling the office directly (01342 832359) or e-mailing our absence line (absence@dormansland.surrey.sch.uk).

If your child is absent from school and we have not received any notification, then a member of the office team will attempt to make contact with you to find out why your child is not in school. All attempts will be logged on our school register system, including any reasons given for the absence.

If we are unable to make contact with anyone to find out why a child is absent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

5. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS LATE FOR SCHOOL?

Registration starts at 8.50am and registers are closed at 9.15am. If your child arrives after this time without good reason or previous warning they will receive an ‘unauthorised’ mark for the whole session.

If you are aware that your child will be late into school, for whatever reason, please let us know beforehand so that we can let the class teacher know.

6. CAN I TAKE MY CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL FOR ANY OTHER REASON?

It is not in your child’s best interest to miss any days of schooling. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, and all subsequent legislation state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Therefore the answer is “no”. We do not authorise any family holidays or time off during term time, that cannot be deemed as for ‘exceptional’ reasons.
7. IF THE SCHOOL IS CONCERNED ABOUT MY CHILD’S LEVEL OF ATTENDANCE, WILL I BE INFORMED?

Yes, as soon as your child’s attendance drops below 93%. An initial letter and attendance report will be sent to you and you may be invited to attend a meeting.

If, after the school has put all of the official interventions in place and there is still no improvement, a referral will be made to the EWO by the Head Teacher, and you will be informed of this.

8. I AM CONCERNED THAT MY CHILD IS NOT ILL BUT DOES NOT WANT TO COME TO SCHOOL – WHAT SHOULD I DO?

We are fully aware that, in some cases, this does happen and can be for any number of reasons. We are as keen as you are to resolve any underlying issues as quickly as possible, that may be making your child anxious about coming to school.

The best person to talk to, in the first instance, will always by your child’s class teacher. However, the Head Teacher, the school’s Family Liaison Partner (Mrs Lochhead) or any other member of the school’s senior leadership team will always be available for you to speak to if you have any further concerns about your child’s reluctance to come to school.

We will do all we can to work together with you to improve this situation and make sure that your child feels more comfortable about coming to school.

9. MY CHILD SUFFERS FROM AN ON-GOING MEDICAL CONDITION. WHAT HELP IS AVAILABLE FOR THEM THROUGH THE SCHOOL?

Where a child has a recognised medical condition that has been diagnosed by a Consultant (or equivalent) which prevents them from regularly attending school, then the school will seek the help of other agencies in order to support and provide an appropriate and manageable education plan for the child in question. (See also our ‘Children with Medical Needs’ policy).

10. MY CHILD NEEDS A MEDICAL APPOINTMENT OR ORTHODONTIC TREATMENT DURING SCHOOL TIME – WHAT SHOULD I DO?

We completely understand that certain medical appointments, such as orthodontic treatment, have to be carried out in school time and parents have very little choice on the times that they are offered. In these cases we only ask that we are given advance warning and that you return your child to school as quickly as possible.

For all other appointments (such as doctor or dentist) we ask that, where possible, these are made for after 3.15pm, in order for your child to miss as little schooling as possible.

The staff at Dormansland Primary School work hard to make our school an exciting and motivating place in which to work, learn and play. We want all of our children to want to come to school every day and, with the support of parents, we will continue to do all that we can to make this happen.