ATTENDANCE MATTERS - update.

The purpose of this update is to inform you and help you plan in the knowledge of some important changes in the Law.

The government's minimum target for attendance, for all compulsory school age children, is 95%.

As you are aware, in September 2013, The Department for Education (DfE) announced important amendments to legislation surrounding term time holidays. Headteacher's may only approve absence during term-time in exceptional circumstances.

With effect from September 2015, the DfE has further amended legislation relating to the threshold limits relating to unauthorised absence and to persistent absence.

Unauthorised Absence – Depending on the circumstances, parents of children with 10 sessions/5 days (previously 12 sessions/6 days) unauthorised absence during a term or 18 sessions/9 days (previously 20 sessions/10 days) unauthorised absence during a rolling two terms may be referred to the Attendance Welfare Service at the Local Authority, for consideration to be given to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine), for failing to ensure their children's attendance.

Some facts to consider:

1. It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to let the school know why their child is absent
2. All absences must be followed up with a note (even if you've left a telephone message or replied to our text), when your child returns to school
3. Medical/dental appointments should be made outside school hours, where possible; if not, appointments cards-proof of attending should be provided (and will be attached to the register)
4. Absences are recorded in the schools' register as authorised or unauthorised
5. The DfE legislates) tells schools how they must mark pupil absences; they say what should be authorised and what cannot be
6. Only the school (Headteacher) can make the decision whether to authorise absence or not (based on guidance from the DfE)

What constitutes unauthorised absence?

- Unexplained absence (see 1 & 2 above)
- Persistent late arrival, after the register has closed
- Parentally condoned absence
- Unapproved leave

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is defined as "any compulsory school age child whose cumulative attendance is 90% (previously 85%) or below, at any point during the academic year". All absence is included, authorised and unauthorised.

Please help us to help you; if you have any concerns about attendance (or punctuality), please contact us.