



Spotlight on Attendance

A very important message for all parents

September 2016

Dear Parent

Ninestiles School are working in partnership with parents to improve school attendance. We would like to congratulate the many parents who make sure their children attend school regularly. Good attendance will mean that your child is able to get the best out of their lessons, is able to achieve the best grades for their ability and have real opportunities in further education and the world of work.

However, there are still some students who are absent from school without good reason. **Clearly this is not acceptable. It is parents' legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education.**

Absence disrupts the education of the individual student and the whole class. Children who do not attend regularly:

- do not achieve well in examinations
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- miss out on social events
- are more likely to become involved in crime

Absence can only be authorised where there is good cause, for example if a child is too ill to attend. **Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence - not parents.** Authorisation must be within the boundaries set by the Education Act 1996.

Please remember that parental illness, alleged bullying, going shopping, family holidays, visiting family members or not wanting to go to school are not acceptable reasons to be absent. These are unauthorised absences.

Truancy, sometimes known as "Wagging it", is also unauthorised absence.

Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

We will improve attendance by making it clear within the school and local community that unauthorised absence is not acceptable. ***Spotlight on Attendance*** identifies students with poor attendance and monitors them as part of the **Action Group**.

Action Group parents will receive another letter advising them about improving attendance. If there are any more unauthorised absences they will be invited to a meeting to try to resolve any difficulties. After this, any further unauthorised absence will result in the Local Authority taking legal action.

The legal action we will take includes:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) - magistrates can fine each parent up to £1000 per child, add costs and impose Parenting Orders.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) - magistrates can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and/or impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Note that being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	39 75 minute lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	78 75 minute lessons
70%	57 days	12 weeks	156 75 minute lessons

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If your child is in the **Action Group** you will receive further contact from us. It is important that you co-operate fully with the Education Social Worker, Ninestiles School.

You will be informed about the results of **Spotlight on Attendance**.

Yours sincerely



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Principal

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