



11th October 2021

Dear Parents,

We are writing this special letter to you about attendance to provide you with a clear outline about absence procedures and the School and Local Authority responses to poor pupil attendance.

Excellent attendance at school is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. Each absence is classed as **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid. Unauthorised is where there is no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

The following reasons are **not** acceptable:

- Shopping visits
- Care for family members
- Days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- Parents' work commitments or business trips
- Holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- Parental illness
- Celebrating birthdays

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence. **Our telephone number is 01904 806285.** It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not contact us we have a duty to contact you so that we are sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure. The arrangements for reporting your child's absence are:

1. If your child is absent from school please let us know **by 8.45am at the latest.**
2. If you have not informed us, school will phone you after the register **at 9.15am.**
3. On the rare occasion that we cannot contact you, we will phone all of your emergency contacts.
4. In circumstances where we are still unable to make contact, and therefore do not know that your child is safe, Miss Chaplin and I will visit your home.
5. If no one answers, we will post a letter informing you of our visit.
6. If we return to school and still do not know the whereabouts of your child, we will notify the police.

Skelton Primary School
Brecksfield, Skelton, York YO30 1YB
Tel: 01904 806285
Email: hello@ske.hslt.academy
Website: ske.hslt.academy



Absence through illness or medical appointments will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over patterns of illness we will discuss this with you to gain a better understanding of any problems and offer support. It is generally better if medical and dental appointments are arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend appointments during school hours please provide evidence of the appointment.

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. The only exception to this is where parents serve in the armed forces (this does not extend to the emergency services i.e. Police, Fire, Ambulance etc.). Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday. The school term dates are published at least a year in advance and this supports you being able to book holidays during school holidays.

We have a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance is low and there are invalid reasons given for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents condone absence (e.g. taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays) then parents are liable to a fine of £60 per pupil per parent. Of course, no one wants this to happen but we need to be clear about the issue.

We expect that you will:

- ALWAYS encourage regular attendance and be aware of your legal responsibilities
- ALWAYS ensure your child arrives at school punctually and fully prepared for the school day
- Ensure that you contact school whenever your child is unwell and unable to attend school
- Contact the school by 9.00am on the first day of a child's absence and telephone every day thereafter unless your child has a doctors certificate
- Contact us promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep your child away from school

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter. We hope it will help to give you a clear understanding about the School's expectations in this matter. We are always pleased to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our attendance record.

Yours sincerely,

H Smithson

Miss Hannah Smithson

Head of School | Skelton Primary School