



# Beaconside Primary & Nursery School

Dear Parents / Carers

As you may be aware, at the start of this academic year the Government and Department for Education has placed increased emphasis on education settings to monitor attendance.

From August 2024, new guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' became mandatory for schools to follow. Whilst the law remains unchanged in that every child has the right to full time education suitable to their age, and parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends regularly, the guidance does however now set out a clear framework for schools to follow where irregular attendance or persistent absence is identified.

The Government has introduced this new guidance and measure due to increased absence rates across all schools. This is a pattern that we have also seen here at Beaconside. A significantly higher number of pupils were absent from school last academic year for longer periods of time, resulting in a much higher number of children being classed as persistently absent. This is something we need to work with parents and children to address to try to improve.

The basic framework laid out in the new guidance is to provide a supportive but challenging approach in supporting children and families where attendance is classed to be persistent or concerning. Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% at any given point during a school year are classed as being persistently absent. Across the school year, this equates to 19 days of school absence. A breakdown of attendance percentages and time missed is on the school website, under 'Parents/Attendance'.  
<https://www.beaconside.co.uk/attendance/>

During the school year, we may contact you to notify you about your child's attendance if it falls below Government set thresholds. When looking at reasons for absence, as a school we always consider individual circumstances before contacting you about your child's attendance. We realise that many absences are unavoidable either through illness or other circumstances, however we need to make sure we keep you, as parents, informed about your child's attendance.

We also want to raise awareness about the link between attendance and your child's attainment and progress. We have noticed when analysing pupil data that those pupils with lower attendance have gaps in their knowledge due to elements of the curriculum being missed. Whilst staff will always do their utmost to ensure they try to cover all important areas of knowledge with pupils, where pupils miss extended periods of time either through holiday or longer, regular periods of absence, it is extremely difficult to embed knowledge.

It has long been school policy not to issue fines when parents choose to take children out of school for holidays. Currently, this is going to remain unchanged, however there is increasing pressure on schools to issue such fines, and the monetary value of these fines has recently increased. It is something that is regularly reviewed at Governing Body meetings, and if as a school we decide to implement fining as school policy, this will be communicated to all parents beforehand.

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