

September 2012

Dear Parent/Carer

I am the Attendance Improvement Officer working with Oak View School. I regularly review attendance and discuss concerns with the Headteacher.

I am writing to encourage you to maximise your child's school attendance which will help them to get the most out of their primary education, and put them in a good position ready for the transition to secondary school. If that sounds like a long way off for your child, believe me the time will fly by! Here are some steps you can take:

- ✓ Talk to school staff – tell them about any issues or concerns you have.
- ✓ Call the school on the first day of any absence and keep them updated.
- ✓ Send your child back to school promptly after any illness.
- ✓ If you're not sure if your child is well enough for school – send them in. Tell the office or class teacher of your concern and the school will call you to collect them if necessary. (Usually once in school a child will be fine.)
- ✓ Make medical/dental appointments outside school hours where possible.
- ✓ Take family holidays during the school holidays – not during term time.
- ✓ Be positive about school – even if your own experiences were not good.
- ✓ Establish good bedtime and morning routines to help you get to school on time.

You may have heard that the Government is raising the level of Fixed Penalty fines for unauthorised absence to £60 – rising to £120 if unpaid after 28 days. This increase will come into effect from September 2012. You may not be aware that the parents of a child who has ongoing unauthorised absences may be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court and risks a fine of up to £2,500 *per parent* and that this offence also carries a criminal record. In extreme cases the Court can also impose up to a 3 month prison sentence.

Where there are identified attendance concerns, both the school and I will always try to work with parents to improve a child's attendance before any of these measures are taken.

As a parent/carer, you naturally want your child to achieve their full potential. A child who attends school regularly will learn and achieve to the best of their ability. They usually also establish good, lasting friendships more easily than children who miss school for odd days or blocks of time. In the longer term your child is establishing the qualities of punctuality and reliability which will prove invaluable both throughout their schooldays and their future working life.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or the school if you have any concerns about your child's school attendance. We are here to support you to help your child.

Attendance Improvement Officer  
Tel: 0300 123 4043