



UPLANDS MANOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Carers

Important - School Attendance

It is vitally **important that children attend school every day** so that they do not fall behind with their learning and can be supported in achieving to the very best of their potential.

Types of absence from school

- *Authorised absences* - reasons are considered valid
- *Unauthorised absences* - no explanation from parents or unacceptable reasons are given.

The following are unacceptable reasons for children to be kept off school and would be unauthorised:

- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- parents having to work
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- parents are ill
- difficulties getting your child to school (transport, finances etc) – *we can often support with this if notified in advance*
- collecting passports or papers (this should be planned and done in holiday time)

If a child has 10 unauthorised sessions (one session is either a morning or an afternoon) in a 25 day period, school can notify Sandwell LA and ask them to issue a fixed penalty notice.

What to do if your child is sick and unable to attend school

If your child is unable to attend school through illness **you must inform us by telephone on the first day of absence, before 9.00am. You then need to call us every day your child is absent** to update us on their illness and also their expected date to return to school.

Our number is: **0121 558 1602**. You can speak with a member of staff or leave an answerphone message. You can also text us via the School Gateway app.

- **Too many parents are not informing us when their child is off sick which is unacceptable. These absences are usually unauthorised.**
- If you do not supply us with this information in a timely manner, we have a duty to contact you so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding concern.
- **If your child has a sickness / diarrhoea bug, they must stay off school for 48hrs after the last time they were sick or had diarrhoea.**

Please read the NHS guidance about when a child can attend school and when they should stay at home: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Medical and Dental Appointments

Medical appointments, unless emergencies or specialist appointments (e.g. at hospital), should be organised outside of the school day so that your child is not disadvantaged by missing out on key learning.

- Proof of appointments during the school day must be provided to school and we must be notified in advance of parents needing to collect their children.

Exceptional Circumstances

We understand there will be some exceptional occasions (e.g. death of family members, weddings) where children will need to be off school. **We will always be sympathetic to such situations and do our best to support families.**

Other 'Leave of Absence' Requests

A leave of absence form must be completed and returned to school as early as possible to request a planned absence for your child. This will be considered by our senior leadership team and we will inform you of the outcome.

- *Please note, family holidays or extended trips abroad are not authorised in term time for any reason.*
- Last year, we issued over 45 fixed penalty notices to families for taking unauthorised term time holidays

Attendance at School – is your child missing out?

- **Good school attendance is considered to be 96% or above, or no more than 8 days missed of school per whole academic year**
- **Unacceptable school attendance is anything under 90%. In a full school year, this means these children will have missed 19 days or more from school (4 weeks or more)** - these children are persistent absentees and their attendance is a cause for concern. *All absences for any reason will be unauthorised until attendance improves to above 90% again.*
- **It is equally important that your child is on time every day – 10 minutes late per day is nearly 1 hour of missed learning each week**, usually in key areas such as phonics, reading and maths. This unfairly disadvantages your child and is not acceptable.
 - ***Our doors close at 8.50am*** so that all children are in class, ready to learn by 8.55am
 - ***Any arrivals after 9.15am result in an unauthorised absence mark for the child's morning session.***

Some children are consistently brought late to school, including regularly being brought after 9.15am. This is a serious concern and parents will be invited into meetings to discuss the reasons and possible solutions for this.

Our School's Attendance Target and Rewards

- ✓ **Our target for this year is 96%.**

To encourage children to help us to achieve this target, we will be rewarding good attendance for all children achieving 96% or better every half term - children will receive certificates and prizes, such as fidget toys, gel pens, pencils etc.

In July, any child who has achieved 96% attendance for the whole year will be rewarded in school with a special celebration event

What School will do to Challenge Poor Attendance

We regularly monitor attendance in school and identify families where attendance is a concern. In these cases, we will:

- ✓ write to you to inform you that your child's attendance needs to improve
- ✓ invite you into school to discuss reasons for absence and to see if any support is needed to help improve attendance. ***We are keen to work in partnership with parents to address any barriers that you might be facing***
- ✓ put support in place and set targets for improved attendance moving forwards
- ✓ If no improvements are made, potentially refer parents to the attendance and prosecution service to issue fines and take further action

Our current attendance figures so far this year are:

- Whole School Attendance – 94.1% ***This needs to improve***
- Persistent Absenteeism – 20.8% ***This is far too high***

Please work with us to have the highest expectations for your child in terms of attendance and punctuality. We are here to try and support if there are any issues that parents are facing. Your children deserve the best start in life and their education is key to making sure they get this.

Yours faithfully



A Dickinson
Head Teacher

