



Standens Barn Primary School

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Headteacher: Amie James

September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance at school is important and research shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good attainment, which can have a damaging effect on their future life chances. At Standens Barn Primary School, we encourage all pupils to strive for 100% attendance; every day and every lesson counts.

Our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our children receive the most from their education and reach their full potential. This letter is to remind you that the law requires all parents/carers to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.

All schools in the country must follow Department for Education guidance regarding attendance and it clearly states that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

There are 175 non-school days per year for holidays, shopping and appointments. There is no need, except in extreme circumstances, to miss a day's education.

I would therefore like you to ensure that **dental and medical appointments should be made outside of school hours**. Our office staff will ask you for the evidence of medical appointments otherwise the absence will be unauthorised.

As of September 2013, DfE guidelines state that schools may **not** authorise absence or time for holidays during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. **If five or more consecutive days unauthorised leave is taken you will be referred to the Local Authority and this may result in a fine and possible prosecution.**

From 19th August 2024, a new National Framework for Penalty Notices has been introduced. The aim is to improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England.

The national framework includes:

- A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) for any unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 week period may span different terms or school years. For example, 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the summer term and a further 8 within the autumn term.
- An increase to the rate of a penalty notice from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the

same child within a rolling 3 year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.

- A national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool must be considered (such as prosecution or another attendance legal interventions).

West Northamptonshire Council is in the process of consulting with schools to develop a revised local code of conduct. The document will be published on West Northamptonshire Council's website following the consultation.

We have amended our School's Attendance Policy in line with the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, a copy can be found on our website.

If your child is unable to attend school for any reason, it is important that you phone the main school office **(01604 413151)** by 8:50 am to inform us.

If we do not hear from you, our office staff will contact you by telephone but if we are still unable to make contact, staff may conduct a home visit to ensure all is safe and well.

We monitor attendance very closely and when absence becomes a concern, we will send an attendance letter to parents/carers. If absence continues, we will invite you in for a meeting with the school to put an action plan including a parent contract in place to improve attendance. If absences continue and attendance remains a concern we may then refer you to the School Attendance Support Service and this may result in a fixed penalty notice and possible prosecution.

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time wherever possible to ensure that they can make the most of the educational experiences we offer at Standens Barn.

I would therefore like to thank you in advance for your ongoing support with this.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Amie James
Head teacher

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