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Thursday, 18 July 2024

ATTENDANCE

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we get closer to the end of this academic year, we begin to look to September. I would like to remind you of our expectations for attendance for the next academic year. We are committed to ensuring that our children get the best possible chance of 'success'. We expect to see all our children back in school on Wednesday 4th September, ready to begin the new school year. Research shows that if a child attends every day during the first week of term, they will go on to attend regularly throughout the term. Understandably there are occasions when this might not be possible and so our attendance expectation is that children will have an attendance record of at least 96% but of course, we will always be aiming for 100%!

Penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, is being introduced following changes to the law. **These new Government regulations will come into effect from 19 August 2024**, and we wanted to bring this to your attention now, as it will affect when penalty notices are issued in Hertfordshire. *What are the changes?*

1. There will be a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.
2. The new rules mean you will no longer be able to take your child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.
3. There will be an increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued. Note you will be issued a fine per child, per parent. E.g. if you have 2 children, the fine will be £240 if paid within 28 days.
4. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
5. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of our policy against taking extended family holidays at the beginning of the academic year.

The beginning of the school year is a critical time for children to establish friendships, form relationships with teachers and settle into their new year group. At Cherry Tree we plan activities in the first week back to facilitate this for the



“Learning together, learning for life!”

children, we also remind children of things like their network hands and where they can go if they are feeling worried or concerned about something. Interrupting this process by being absent can make it harder for children to feel connected and may result in feelings of isolation or difficulty adjusting to their academic environment.

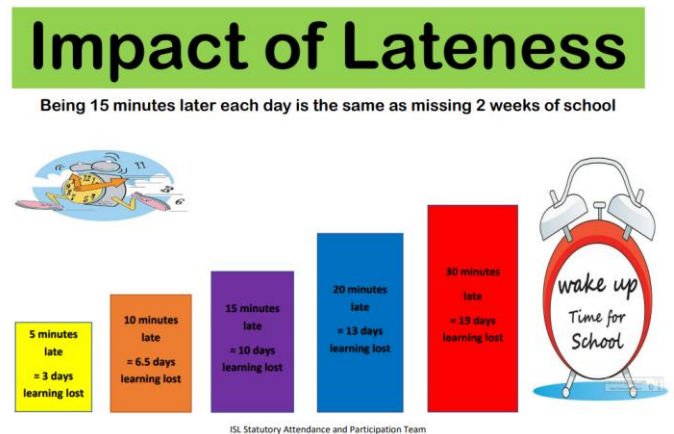
It is important to make you aware that we have a duty to report extended absences to the Local Authority who may decide to issue fines if they feel it is necessary.

As parents, you will want what is best for your children, therefore I ask that before considering booking an extended family holiday that you think about the aforementioned points. By prioritising education and well-being for our children, we empower them to succeed academically and prepare them for a brighter future.

Being on time

From September, our school day for children from Reception to Year 6 will be **08:45 – 15:15**. Classroom doors are opened at **08:44** and learning begins at this time. The field and back gates will be closed at **08:50**. If you arrive late for school, you must come to the school office through the Main Entrance to sign your child in. Similarly, the school day ends at 15:15, please be prompt in picking up your child as this may incur a fee.

You may not realise, but persistent lateness really does add up...



The responsibility of parents

As parents of our children here at Cherry Tree, you should:

- Ensure that your children arrive at school on time
- Instil in your children an appreciation of the importance of attending regularly
- Work in partnership with us at Cherry Tree to resolve issues, which may lead to non-attendance
- Notify the school on the first day if your child is absent. This could be via telephone (preferable), Arbor or email. Please provide an explanation of why your child is not attending school.
- We have set up a new attendance mailbox for reporting absence please send emails and medical appointments to **attendance@cherrytree.herts.sch.uk**
- Avoid where possible arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.
- Avoid booking holidays during term time.
- Be aware of our school's attendance policy

Yours Sincerely

Sandra O'Keeffe

Attendance Officer

Cheska Tyler

Headteacher

Emma Hibberd

Assistant Headteacher

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