



School Attendance

20th July 2022

Dear parents and carers,

As we come towards the end of the school year, I would like to remind you of your responsibilities as parents around school attendance.

We have over 20% of pupils who are this year classed as 'persistently absent' from school. If your child has an attendance of less than 90%, they are classed as persistently absent. All the evidence points to good attendance being crucial to good progress for children academically and socially. Attendance of less than 90% is the equivalent of half a year of schooling missed over 5 years. An attendance of 80% is the equivalent of one year of schooling missed in five. We know that Covid illness and isolation has played a part in some absence, but this does not account for much of the absence of our pupils.

There has been an increase in parents asking for days off for holidays, visiting family etc. We are unable to authorise these days and we ask that you arrange holidays and visits to family during the school holidays. We will have 15 weeks holiday next year and so plenty of time for trips and holidays! Parents who take their children out of school for a holiday are now likely to incur a fixed penalty notice fine from the Local Authority. This is currently set at £60 per child per parent per week.

We will be contacting parents early in September to arrange meetings if we are concerned about your child's attendance. It is important we understand any barriers to attendance and put plans in place in advance of the next academic year.

Many of you are aware that we are expecting an OFSTED visit in the next academic year and attendance is one of the areas they will look closely at. We continue to have a target of 97% for all pupils.

Department for Education Guidance

The Department for Education has recently released a new document 'working together to improve school attendance'. The document sets out the expectations of parents to support their child's attendance at school:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open.



- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness) by phone (0117 965 9150) or email avantigardens@avanti.org.uk
- Only request a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance (using the form which you can request from the school office)
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

If your child is at risk of becoming persistently absent (moving towards 90% attendance):

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support

If your child becomes persistently absent (attendance of 90% or below)

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance
- Proactively engage with formal support offered - including parenting contracts or early help plans that prevent the need for legal intervention

If your child becomes severely absent (below 50% attendance)

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance
- Proactively engage with formal support offered - including parenting contracts or early help plans that prevent the need for legal intervention
- In some cases, the Local Authority will prosecute parents of children who do not attend school, once all other avenues have been exhausted.

It is vital that we work together to ensure attendance at school is good for all pupils. If you are concerned about your child and their attendance, please contact your child's teacher in the first instance.

With best wishes,

Avanti Gardens Attendance Team