

Norfolk County Council

Ormesby Village Junior School

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Headteacher: Ms. Lucy Bates

18th September 2017

Dear

I am writing to remind you that the governors of the school continue to follow the attendance referral criteria set out by Norfolk Children's Services. The government expects schools to give attendance at school the highest of priorities and when Ofsted carries out inspections the inspectors will want to see evidence of rigorous and robust policies in place. The school's 'data dashboard' for the year 2013-2014 on the Ofsted website showed that our attendance figures were in the top 40% of all primary schools. For the whole school year 2014-15, however, our attendance rate fell to 95.56%, with an increased number of children who were persistently absent – i.e. attendance below 85%. Please be aware that this threshold was raised to 90% from September 2015. For the year 2015-2016 attendance was 96% but, again, the percentage of pupils who were persistently absent was too high. For the year 2016-17, the figure fell to 95.3% which we must endeavour to improve upon and I hope that we can count on your support in this matter.

We are appreciative of your current efforts to ensure that your children attend school regularly and of your generally prompt calls to inform us of the reasons for absence. We understand that children can be unwell and so require time away from school to get better. We appreciate that sometimes medical appointments have to take place in school time – and thank you for your efforts to make them out of school time! We also appreciate that for some parents taking holidays during school holiday periods can be difficult, but it is this unauthorised absence in particular that lowers the school's attendance figure. Consequently we are going to follow the guidelines set out below and holidays in term time will only ever be authorised for exceptional circumstances. We ask that you read them carefully and keep them for future reference. This letter and a copy of the formal letter mentioned can also be found on the school's website. This formal letter will be adapted depending on the level/nature of absence.

From the start of the Autumn term 2017 if your child has 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence, (5 days), where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term time a fixed penalty notice will be issued.

From the start of the Autumn term 2017 if your child has three or more weeks of 'broken attendance' you will receive a letter of concern. You will be asked to provide 'medical evidence' of further absences in order for further absences still to be authorised and you may be asked to attend a support meeting if attendance does not improve. 'Broken attendance' means that a child has one or more days away from school each week for a three week period.

From the start of the Autumn term 2017 if your child has 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks, (4.5 days), for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday a fixed penalty notice will be issued.

Please be aware that if a child's attendance falls below 90% he/she is classed as 'persistently absent'. This 'persistent absence' figure is used as part of the school's attendance data and is scrutinised closely by Ofsted.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a Fixed Penalty Notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the Local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

We have tried to make these guidelines as clear as possible but do not hesitate to ask for clarification if you are still unsure. We value the relationship we have with parents and we will always ensure that we keep you well informed about your child's attendance to avoid sending letters whenever possible. The school does not receive any fixed penalty money.

This letter will be handed to you personally by the end of this week. Where this is not possible it will be posted to you, as it will to parents on our mailing list. It will be translated for parents who speak English as an additional language.

Yours sincerely

L. J. Bates

Lucy Bates

Headteacher

