



St Gilbert's RC Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs C Fox BSc, Bed, NPQH

7th September 2015

Dear Parents,

Did you know this September is Attendance Awareness Month?

As Assistant Head I have responsibility for ensuring St. Gilberts' excellent attendance is in order to ensure your child is successful in achieving their full potential. This newsletter has been put together to provide as much information as possible regarding your child's attendance.

The Department for Education tracks attendance carefully and each year St. Gilbert's just about makes our attendance target. I have every confidence that we can improve this to become more consistent and this academic year we have set ourselves an annual attendance target of 96.0% (4.0% absence rate). The vast majority of our families achieve an attendance level of at least 96%, however, where families do not achieve a satisfactory level of attendance we will discuss this with you and see how we can support you to improve.

We do appreciate that children get ill from time to time – but there are primary schools in the UK achieving an overall level of attendance as high as 98% - well above the national average. We hope you can support us in achieving our target — we can only do it with your support! I am happy to answer any questions that may occur across the year regarding attendance so please do not hesitate to contact me or make an appointment with the Office.

Mrs. Neville (Assistant Head)

RED, AMBER, GREEN ATTENDANCE (R.A.G.)

We categorise levels of attendance into red, amber or green (R.A.G.). At the end of each half term we will send an Attendance update letter based on R.A.G. criteria. Depending on the individual circumstances we may arrange for you to come into school to discuss your child's attendance levels.

GREEN - 96% and above - Good attendance – in line with, or above national expected average, ideally where all pupils should aim to be.

AMBER - below 96% - Attendance below expected level - if your child drops below 96%, they are considered to be in amber, a signal that attendance has dropped and needs to improve.

RED – either below 90% or no improvement - If attendance is below 90% or has not improved from a previous amber letter, despite intervention from school, Education Welfare may become involved.

REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Every year, in conjunction with the Rotary Club, we make an effort to reward those children who have had excellent attendance. This will continue this year so each child who has 100% attendance will get a voucher. We are supplementing this with termly prizes and a grand attendance draw at the end of the year for those with the highest attendance. However, children have to have been be IN, for a chance to WIN! 😊

ATTENDANCE FACTS:

Above 97% Less than 6 days absence a year! Excellent attendance! Pupils with this attendance should achieve the best grades they can. They will be invited to take part in a special reward trip for celebrating excellent attendance.

95% Less than 10 days absence in a year! Pupils with this attendance are more likely to achieve their target grades

90% 20 days absence over the year! Pupils with this attendance are missing approximately a month (20 days) of school per year and may fall behind in Maths, Literacy and other subjects; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best as they will have missed key elements of their learning.

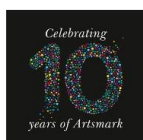
85% 30 days absence in a year! These pupils are missing approximately 6 weeks of school a year! It will be very difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best.

80% Pupils with this attendance are missing a day for every week of school! It will be almost impossible to keep up with their work. Parents of pupils with this level of attendance will be well known to the Education Welfare Officer (Targeted Support Team). Your child's attendance will be closely monitored and letters will be sent home to alert you of their poor attendance. In the worst case scenario, you could incur a fine or have to attend court.

REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS PUNCTUAL ATTENDANCE

Arriving on time for registration is important as late arrivals can be disruptive to the class and embarrassing for the child who is late. Children can miss important information and vital learning opportunities during registration. If you arrive after 9.15am then the morning session gets marked as Late. If you arrive after the doors have closed an adult must sign the child in at the Office – this is for fire regulations and general safety.

P.T.O.



GOING TO SCHOOL—WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT

Lots of people think that missing the odd day at school here and there can't do much harm. But even taking a short amount of time out can be a problem. Your child might fall behind in their work and not be able to catch up. If there are gaps in their knowledge, they will suffer when school assessments come around. There could be other problems too. Children who miss school are missing out on the social side of things, which affects their ability to make and keep friends.

THE LEGAL BIT ...

School attendance is important because the law requires it. As a parent you are legally responsible for making sure your child gets a full time education. This means registering a child at school and making sure they attend regularly.

New Attendance Regulations September 2013

There have been changes to the law which govern attendance in schools and holidays during term time. Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on the 1st September 2013.

The amendments make it clear that Head teachers **may not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

What this means is that St. Gilbert's will no longer authorise holidays taken during term time. If there are 'exceptional circumstances', each case will be considered on an individual basis and must be done by written application using a request form. All other non-medical absences will be treated as unauthorised.

These legislation changes have been made by the Department of Education in order to improve attendance and emphasise the importance of ensuring that no valuable school time is lost. School is absolutely essential for pupils' future life chances.

Please work with us to ensure we make the most of every minute of your child's valuable time in school by getting them here everyday, on time and ready to learn.

If you are considering taking your child out of school for any period of time we still request that an application

form is submitted not less than two weeks/ ten school days before the first day off. This is to give sufficient time for processing. You may be contacted to discuss the application by a member of the Management team.

All leave of absence requests will be responded to, in writing, by the school. In the case that your circumstances have granted approved leave you must keep the letter – especially if you are travelling abroad to avoid any possible fines.

WHAT'S ACCEPTABLE, WHAT'S NOT?

Of course, there will be times when your child has to miss school for a good reason. If your child needs time off you need to contact the Office as far in advance as possible.

When is it ok for your child to stay away from school?

- **Illness** – If your child is genuinely ill then, of course, they will need to remain at home. Please contact the school office, before 9.15am with an absence reason. If you are unsure as to whether your child can attend school, please contact your doctor or speak to the school office.
- **Medical appointments** - try to avoid medical appointments during school time, or make them as close to the end of the school day as possible, naturally there will be times when this isn't possible, but try to give us as much advance warning as possible.
- **Bereavements** – let us know as soon as possible if someone in your family dies – we will want to make sure that the staff and pupils act sensitively with your child on return,
- **Religious festivals** – Apply in advance for time off for religious reasons.

When is it not ok for your child to stay away from school?

- **Holidays** – only in exceptional circumstances will term time holidays be authorised by the school. Applications are available from the Office and must be submitted at least 10 school days before the first day of absence.
- **Birthdays** - your child should still attend school, even if it is their birthday.
- **Shopping** – or any other activity for which there is no serious reason for your child to be away from school.

