



Nurture, Grow, Flourish.

Forest & Sandridge CE Primary School
Cranesbill Road, Melksham
Wiltshire
SN12 7GN

Principal: Mr Scott James
Vice Principal: Mr James Mead
Assistant Principal and SENCO: Mrs Helen Chappell



Dear Parents/Carers,

Attendance Update

We wanted to make you aware of the update to statutory guidance for attendance which came into place from 19th August 2024. We feel by sharing this information you will be best prepared for the school year ahead and to ensure your child is able to make the most of every school day. Secondly it will allow you to open any dialogue with the Headteacher and School Attendance Champion if you have any current concerns or feel you may need support early in this school year.

Please see information from the **Department for Education**;

Every moment in school counts and days missed add up quickly. Evidence shows that pupils who have good attendance enjoy better wellbeing and school performance than those who don't. There are only a few circumstances where a child is allowed to miss school such as illness or where the school has given permission because of an exceptional circumstance. However, if your child misses school without a good reason, local councils and schools can intervene and you may be issued a fine. It's important to acknowledge that children with long-term medical or more serious mental health conditions, and some children may face additional barriers.

In the majority of cases, schools and local authorities will try and provide support to help you improve your child's attendance first, but if this isn't effective or the absence is for unauthorised term time holiday, parents may face paying a fine. Currently, it's the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents, meaning the process varies from council to council. However, under the new national framework, all schools will be required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.

"From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. Fines are a last resort, and parents will be offered support to help improve their child's attendance first. The vast majority of fines for unauthorised absence are issued for term time holidays."

Your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day. Please find supporting guidance here; <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school>
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance.
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school.

If your child is absent and you haven't received advance permission from the headteacher to take your child out of school, the school and local council may take action. Before that, your child's school and your local council are expected to support you to improve the child's attendance before any measures are put in place. For most pupils, the best place to be during term-time is in school, surrounded by the support of their friends and teachers.

If any of the above concerns you or would like to discuss it further please contact the school office in the first instance.

Yours sincerely,

Scott James
Headteacher