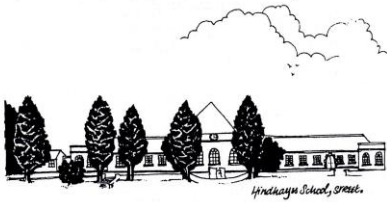


# Hindhayes Infant School

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Headteacher: Mrs Kate Nester

28 September 2023

## School Attendance

Dear Parent/Carer

This year, there is a strong focus by the Department for Education (DfE) and Somerset County Council (SCC), on improving school attendance. Schools are issued with attendance guidance, which they are required to follow. In this letter, I would like to share with you what the new guidance means for you and your child.

### Why is attendance so important for our children?

We all recognise the importance of having a good education to secure opportunities in adult life. Your child's chances of success may be affected by not attending school regularly. If they do not attend school regularly, they may struggle to keep up with school work and miss out on the essential, social side of school life. Setting good attendance patterns starts from a young age and impacts on us throughout our lives. Being on time is also vital. Arriving at school late can be very disruptive for your child, the teacher and the other children in the class. At Hindhayes Infants, all pupils are expected to arrive by 8:50am.

<b>Above 97%</b>	Less than 6 days absence a year <b>excellent attendance!</b> These pupils will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future. Pupils will also get into a habit of attending school regularly.
<b>95-96%</b>	Between 7 - 9 days absence a year. These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. However, improvement is needed to make sure this happens.
<b>91-94%:</b>	Between 11- and 17-days absence a year These pupils are at risk of missing a significant amount of learning. If your child's attendance falls into this category: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• you may be invited to a meeting with a member of the leadership team to determine if there are any issues preventing your child from attending school regularly</li><li>• we may write to you again to request medical evidence to authorise any future absences</li></ul>
<b>Less than 90%:</b>	At least 19 days absence a year. The Government classes pupils in this group as ' <b>Persistent Absentees.</b> ' Parents of pupils in this group may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer, and/or may receive a Penalty Notice or legal action taken by the Local Authority.

## What does the law say?

By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must attend school. Once a child is registered at Hindhayes, you are responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your child fails to attend regularly, the Local Authority (LA) will take legal action against you. The Local Authority is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities. If you think that you may need to take your child out of school, please discuss the reasons with your child's teacher as soon as possible. Reasons such as family bereavement or taking part in religious observance would be acceptable for short absences. Unacceptable reasons for missing school include trips, birthday celebrations or holidays.

## What happens if your child does not attend school regularly?

If your child does not regularly attend school, you run the risk of being issued with a penalty notice or being taken to court. As a school, we are required to follow the local authority processes around attendance.

**These processes are not set or controlled by us as a school.** If your child does not attend school regularly, the following may happen:

- The Local Authority will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 per parent, per child for 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a twelve school-week period.
- Magistrates can also impose a Parenting Order, which means that the parent has to attend a counselling and guidance programme, usually in the form of a parenting class.
- Parents can be fined up to £2000 for failing to ensure their child attends school regularly.

## What about authorised absences?

There may be times when your child has to miss school because they are ill. This is to be expected, and for the odd day off sick you should follow Hindhayes procedures for notifying us of your child's absence. Children may also have to attend a medical or dental appointment in school time. However, please try to make routine appointments such as dental check-ups, during the school holidays or after school hours. Any absence must be requested as far in advance as possible. Absences can only be authorised by school.

What can you do to help?

- Be on the alert for any particular reasons for non-attendance, such as bullying or problems with school work and discuss these with your child's teacher.
- If you suspect that your child may be unhappy at school, you should contact the school as soon as possible so that you can work with us to resolve any difficulties.
- If your child is ill or absent for any reason, please contact the school on the first day of absence, and every subsequent day of absence.
- Take an interest in your child's education. Ask them about their day and praise and encourage their achievements at school.

When might we write to you about school attendance?

Your child's attendance is monitored by our Attendance team every week to ensure that any falling attendance is supported quickly. We will communicate to you in writing at the following stages:

- Letter 1 – 6 sessions (3 days) of absence within any half term period
- Letter 2 – failure to improve and further absences in the same half term period. You will be invited to attend an 'Attendance Agreement' meeting
- Letter 3 – Escalation for persistently absent pupils and a referral to the Education Safeguarding Service.
- Holiday Refusal – When the school have not granted permission for term time leave. Any holidays taken over 10 sessions (5 days) will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 per parent, per child.
- Penalty Notice Warning – A letter to inform when your child has reached 6 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a 12 school-week period, and that you are at risk of reaching the threshold for a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

**Please note:** The letters mentioned above, have been written by Somerset County Council and issued to all schools. We are required to follow the attendance processes they have set. We recognise that all children, at some point, have to take time off school for genuine and unavoidable reasons. At this early point in the year, even a few day's absence can make your child's overall percentage drop, triggering a letter being sent home. Please be assured that we will listen to you and take into account, your child's individual circumstances and reasons for absence. We are committed to working in partnership with you to

ensure every child at Hindhayes has excellent attendance so that they can benefit from the broad and enriched curriculum we offer.

Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Hindhayes school admissions team; Miss Millie Chant, Mr. Scott Carpenter and myself who together support with the monitoring of pupil attendance. We will endeavour to help with any issues, which may be affecting your child's attendance. Thank you for your support.

Kind regards

Mrs Kate Nester  
Headteacher

