



Gipsy Lane
Balsall Common
Coventry
CV7 7FW

Tel: 01676 535222
Fax: 01676 536735
office@heart-england.co.uk
www.heart-england.co.uk

Principal:
Jacqueline Hughes-Williams

Re: Attendance

Dear Parent / Carer

We hope you all had a restful summer break after a very challenging and difficult last academic year. We appreciate that parents will now want to ensure their child is able to return to school in a safe learning environment and would like to reassure you that we have taken every measure to ensure your child's health and wellbeing and are closely following Department for Education guidance and expectations.

Attendance is taken very seriously at Heart of England School and we work to help students achieve 100% attendance. Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success. Making school attendance a priority, can help your child get better grades, develop healthy life habits and have a better chance of succeeding at school.

Compulsory Attendance and Reporting of Absence

School attendance has been compulsory for all pupils from 8th March 2021. This means that the usual rules on school attendance apply. Please note:

- It is a Parent/Carer's duty to ensure their child attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- Parents/Carers should contact school on the first day of any unavoidable absence and subsequent days in line with the school policy
- It is the school's responsibility to record attendance in the register and follow up absence. If no reason has been given for any absence schools will follow their escalation procedure and safeguarding procedures which may include contacting other emergency contacts and referrals to our School Liaison Officer
- There is the option to issue sanctions, including Fixed Penalty Notices, in line with the Local Authority Codes of Conduct where all other actions have failed to secure regular attendance or where unauthorised leave / holidays have taken place during term time
- It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to ensure that your child arrives at school on time.

Individuals are not required to self-isolate if they live in the same household as someone with COVID-19, or are a close contact of someone with COVID-19, and any of the following apply:

- they are fully vaccinated
- they are below the age of 18 years and 6 months
- they have taken part in or are currently part of an approved COVID-19 vaccine trial
- they are not able to get vaccinated for medical reasons.

Instead, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace, informed they have been in close



contact with a positive case and advised to take a [PCR test](#). We would encourage all individuals to take a PCR test if advised to do so before returning to school.

All clinically extremely vulnerable pupils should attend their education setting unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents come first to the Office before collecting children. Please bring your child to the office on returning from the appointment. We would be grateful if you would please indicate in advance whether your child will be returning for the midday meal. Medical and dental appointments will count as authorised absences.

Emergency Occasions

There are occasions (for example bereavements or acute family difficulties) where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs.

Holidays

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. The only exception to this is where parents serve in the armed forces (this does not extend to the emergency services i.e. Police, Fire, Ambulance etc). Should you wish to make a request an authorised holiday during term time, you should complete an 'Absence Request Form' (<https://heart-england.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Absence-Request-Form.pdf>). This form must be submitted to the Principal for approval. Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported as a matter of course to the Education Enforcement Team; we are under a duty to do this. Where unauthorised leave is taken, a fixed penalty fine might be issued by the Local Authority.

Our Aim for Attendance

Average attendance would be around 96% for the year, with outstanding attendance above 97%.

What Constitutes Poor Attendance?

Anything below 94% is weak and under 90% is regarded as *persistent absence* by the DFE. In this school we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 95%. We monitor attendance and provide termly reports on each pupil's attendance.

At the end of each half term we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90% and issue a courtesy letter or contact Parents/Carers. We then monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken weeks developing.

Our Duty Of Care: Responding To Unauthorised Or Persistent absence

We have a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low and where there are invalid reasons (judged by the Education Enforcement Team, not the parent) for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents condone absence (e.g. by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays) then parents render themselves liable to a fine of £60 per pupil per parent. This could mean a fine of £360 for two parents of three children. This would be doubled to £720 if the fine is unpaid within 21 days and could ultimately lead to a criminal conviction. Of course, no one wants this to happen but we need to be very clear about the issue.



HEART OF ENGLAND
Creating Futures

We hope that this correspondence will enable a clear understanding of the school's expectations with regards to attendance. As always, if you have any questions please feel free to contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Gethyn Bennett

Vice Principal