



Sir Edmund Hillary Primary School

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Dear Parents,

RE: Attendance and Lateness

Over the last six months I have been communicating about the need for the children to be maximising every opportunity that they have within their education and have especially been mentioning that parents need to have very clear and exceptional reasons if a child is being taken out of school during term time. ***Thank you so much for your attentiveness to this, you are a great parent body to work with.*** The result has been that I have had to issue far fewer Penalty Notices for Term Time Leave of Absence than I had initially anticipated.

I have, however, noticed an increasing number of late arrivals in school so after half term we will be fully implementing the Lateness and Punctuality aspect of the school's Attendance Policy. For those of you who have received Attendance certificates in the past you may have seen only a single "L" for Late code. After half term, we will be recording any arrival at school after 8.55am with "U" to help discriminate between the two different types of Late arrival.

If a child arrives after 8.50 they have undoubtedly missed the orientation to the school day that the teacher gives, so they will, by definition ...

- ..be 'disorientated' for their school day.
- They will have missed some vital 'revisiting learning' routines that the children complete during the registration period.
- They will feel shame and embarrassment when they enter the classroom whilst everybody else is working.

This is the relevant extract from our Policy regarding Late Attendance.

Punctuality & Lateness Procedures

The starting time for the school session is 8.45 am for KS1-2 and 8.50 and F2. Pupils are expected to be in the playground between 8.30 and 8.45 a.m. The school gates close at 8.50. Registration finishes at 8.55 a.m. Children arriving after 8.55 am will have a late mark recorded at that point that they arrive.

Parents bringing their children late to school are requested to fill in the Late Book giving a reason for the late arrival.

Pupils arriving late are informed that they are late and an explanation sought. Staff are aware that on some occasions the lateness may not be the fault of the child and use their discretion when dealing with these children.

Parents are regularly reminded of their parental obligation to ensure that the pupils attend on time. If late arrival happens persistently then some of the same processes as for persistent absenteeism will be followed;

including Attendance Panel, Engagement of Family Service and requests for the Local Authority to impose a Penalty Notice.

If a pupil arrives late for school as the result of a doctor's or dental appointment the lateness will be amended and recorded as a medical appointment.

The Head Teacher will monitor lateness and contact parents if this becomes a problem for a child.

In short- we need to know the reason for a child arriving late so as to determine how we handle it, and we will be starting to apply to the Local Authority more frequently to issue Penalty Notices for Late Attendance if after our first communication by letter with you about the issue has not resolved the problem.

The following is the Legal terms in which the Attendance Policy works the at the Local Authority expect us to advise you on:

If an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupil's attendance is deemed to be irregular. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, his/her parent/carer (s) are guilty of an offence. Please also note that if you have more than one child, each child's irregular attendance is dealt with as a separate matter.

The Local Authority may take formal action against you for failure to comply with the law. Penalty notices are issued as an alternative to prosecution, but may not be issued if prosecution is considered to be a more appropriate response to the attendance issues.

Therefore, your child's irregular attendance could result in one of the following actions:

- 1. A Penalty Notice being issued to each person with a caring or parenting role. Each penalty notice is £60 if paid within the first 21 days, rising to £120 if paid between 22-28 days. Failure to pay will result in prosecution.*
- 2. Prosecution. This could lead to fines of up to £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.*

If you are struggling to get your child to school on time because of some of their behaviours then this is the sort of thing we like to understand and be able to help with, so ask your class teacher for some advice and support. Parent's evenings are coming up in the middle of March, but these conversations may need a little more time than that may afford.

Yours , in anticipation of a more punctual Spring Term

Chris Guest
Head Teacher