



# Brackenwood Junior School

## *Learning for Life*



Headteacher: Mr. C. Holmes MMUS.PGCE.NPQH

Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September

### **Attendance**

Dear parents and carers,

I am writing to you regarding school attendance, and some of the ways in which you can help us to achieve our attendance targets this year.

Unsurprisingly, children who are absent from school or who are persistently late, can soon fall behind with their learning. Research conducted by the Department for Education (DfE 2016) confirmed that, as the level of overall pupil absence increases, the likelihood of pupils achieving what they are capable of decreases.

Our whole school attendance for the year 2020-2021 was 96.1%, putting us broadly in line with average for primary schools. However, at the end of last year there were 27 children on roll whose attendance was less than 90% (19 or more days off school). This gives us a persistent absence rate of 11%, a figure which is higher than the national average for primary schools.

Our aim this year is to ensure that as many children as possible achieve attendance of 97% or more. This means fewer than 6 days off during the academic year! We cannot achieve this without your cooperation and support, and there are a number of simple things you can do to help. These include:

- \* Ensuring your child is in school every day (even if they are feeling a little under the weather) unless there is a genuine and unavoidable reason that prevents this. Genuine and unavoidable reasons would include illnesses which require you to keep your child at home, such as symptoms of COVID, chicken pox, conjunctivitis, etc. Please contact the school office for further advice.
- \* Trusting that we will contact you during the school day if your child is ill in school and needs to go home.
- \* Ensuring your child arrives at school on time (8.55am at the latest) and providing any reasons for lateness.
- \* Informing school as soon as possible, by telephone, email or in person, if your child is unable to attend on any day, together with the reason for absence. ([attendance@brackenwood-junior.wirral.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@brackenwood-junior.wirral.sch.uk); 0151 6083001)
- \* Making all medical appointments outside school hours whenever possible, and informing school in advance of any medical appointments that cannot be scheduled out of school time. For absence to be authorised as a medical absence, schools do require evidence, such as an appointment card or letter;
- \* Taking family holidays during school holiday periods, and minimising any requests for authorised absence during term time.
- \* Talking to a member of staff as soon as possible should your child become reluctant to come into school for any reason, or if there are any other issues impacting on school attendance. This is so that any problems can be quickly identified and overcome.

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### **Our schools**

Great Meols Primary School  
Poulton Lancelyn Primary School  
Brackenwood Junior School  
Egremont Primary School  
Stanton Road Primary School  
Church Drive Primary School



**Requests for Leave of Absence:** I understand that there may be times when requesting absence during term time cannot be avoided. Parents may request up to a maximum ten days leave of absence for their children within one academic year. However, by law, I am only able to authorise leave of absence for requests which constitute *exceptional circumstances*, and am unable to authorise more than ten days within one school year. I will not authorise leave of absence for children whose attendance is already below 95%.

**Unauthorised Absence:** I am extremely appreciative that the vast majority of our parents always inform us of the reasons why their children are absent from school, and do not take leave of absence during term time unless this has been authorised. A child's absence will be recorded as *unauthorised* if we do not receive an acceptable explanation for it, or if the child takes leave of absence during term time without authorisation.

**Education Penalty Notices:** In line with the Wirral Local Authority's Code of Conduct for Unauthorised Absence or Exclusions, Education Penalty Notices can be issued to both of the parents of any child who:

1. Has had ten or more sessions of unauthorised absence within one term (or two half-terms)
2. Has taken leave of absence from school without requesting authorisation.
3. Arrives late to school on ten or more separate occasions within one term.

**School Support:** If we become concerned at any stage with your child's attendance level, we will contact you to discuss this. Our intention is to work with you using a range of strategies to ensure that persistent absence does not present a barrier to learning for your child. We will also be working with all the children in school to raise the profile of attendance. We will talk to children regularly about the importance of good attendance, provide exciting activities on a daily and weekly basis to keep encouraging children to come to school, and award certificates to children who achieve high attendance (97%) or 100% attendance throughout the term.

For further information about the school's approach to attendance, please refer to our Attendance Policy on the school website.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. I know that the vast majority of parents already understand the importance of high attendance levels for their children and the impact that even a small amount of absence can have on their education. I am very appreciative that many of you are working with us daily to ensure that your children are in school on time, each day, every day. I hope that we can achieve high attendance (97%) for as many children as possible this year, and I am very grateful to all of you for your support and cooperation.

Very best wishes,

C. Holmes  
Headteacher