



Brackenwood Junior School

Monday 23rd September

Attendance

Dear parents,

I am writing to you regarding attendance and the strategies we will be employing this year to help improve it.

Our whole school level of attendance for the year 2018-2019 was 96.0%, putting us broadly in line with average for primary schools. However, at the end of last year there were 24 children on roll whose attendance was less than 90%. This gives us a persistent absence rate of 9.8%, a figure which is higher than the national average for primary schools.

In order to improve our attendance rates, we will be introducing a range of new strategies this year. These include providing incentives for the children, weekly monitoring of children with low attendance, more frequent letters to parents when attendance becomes a concern and taking measures to tackle unauthorised absence.

Incentives:

Incentives for encouraging children to come to school will include:

- * **Attendance Boards in the School Hall:** These enable us to celebrate and reward each class who achieve high levels of whole class attendance each week.
- * **High Attendance Certificates:** These will be awarded to all children who achieve high levels of attendance (>97%) at the end of each term.
- * **Five for a Fiver:** All children who attend school for a whole week will be entered into a weekly draw to win a £5 note (parents will be notified if your child has won).
- * **End of Term Prize Draw:** All children with attendance of greater than 97% for the term will be entered into a prize draw for a **Kindle Fire** (parents will be notified if your child has won)
- * **End of Year Prize Draw:** All children with attendance of greater than 97% for the year will be entered into a prize draw for a more substantial (and yet to be confirmed!) prize (parents will be notified if your child has won).

Communication with Parents

In an attempt to dramatically reduce the number of children with low attendance, I will be writing to parents more frequently this year. I would hope that all children can achieve attendance of at least 96% and will therefore write to you as soon as your child's attendance has dropped below this figure. Should your child's attendance fall below 91%, I will write to you once more explaining that a further drop in attendance could result in your child becoming a "persistent absentee".

Requests for Leave of Absence

Parents may request up to ten days leave of absence for their children within one academic year. However, please note that, 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. Please also note that 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. Please note that 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.

Punctuality

Each day, a small number of children arrive at school just after 9.00am. Please make every effort to ensure children arrive at school in good time to start the day. Our doors open at 8.45am.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Please note that, in line with the Wirral Local Authority's Code of Conduct for Unauthorised Absence or Exclusions, Fixed 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.

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 the new strategies we have in place will ensure that our overall levels of attendance increase even more this year, and that our rates of persistent absence can reduce.

Yours sincerely,

C. Holmes
Headteacher