

Friday 6th September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers of Ecclesall Primary School,

Improving school attendance continues to be a priority for the Department for Education, and new guidance for schools has been released which came into effect from August 19th 2024 this year. The guidance is more explicit about circumstances in which a penalty notice should be issued in relation to attendance at school. In any situation where a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (equivalent to 5 full days, as each session is half a school day) within a 10 week period, we will have to consider issuing a penalty notice. (Please see the separate attached poster).

We have seen an increase in term-time holiday being taken. Time taken off school when the curriculum continues to be taught to the rest of the children does have an impact on learning, which can be difficult to catch up.

At Ecclesall Primary School, we monitor attendance and have a procedure for following up where we have concerns about a child's attendance. We are required to meet termly with our school attendance and inclusion officer from Sheffield City Council to address concerns about low attendance for individuals.

The vast majority of our children and families have very good attendance at school. We understand that there are exceptional circumstances where term-time absence may be requested from school and have a procedure for considering this. There are also times when children should not be in school because of illness or other circumstances.

A child who has attendance of 90% or lower is classed officially as being 'persistently absent'. An attendance rate of 90% is the equivalent of missing half a day of school every week, and could clearly have a significant impact on a child's learning.

As well as the above threshold for considering penalty notices, where a child's attendance is 90% or lower, and we do not have a clear reason for this, or are concerned going forward, parents will receive an initial letter, with follow-up monitoring and communication.

We are committed to working in partnership with parents to provide support in all circumstances related to attendance. If you or your child are experiencing barriers to attendance, please do let us know so that we can explore how we can help with this.

Kind regards

Emma Hardy
Head Teacher
Ecclesall Primary School