



St Edmund's and St Joseph's Catholic Primary Schools

Executive Headteacher: Maria Kemble
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*"We learn together in God's love by
encouraging and supporting one another."*

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30th October 2023

Dear Parents,

Re: Absence and Holidays during term time.

As you know from communication last year, the government have identified attendance as a high priority for children after the disruption of the pandemic. Good attendance is key to successful learning and positive social and emotional outcomes for children. New guidance was issued by the DfE last year and can be found here

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

We wish to work with you to support high levels of attendance and thought it would be helpful to clarify the procedures with regard to notifying the school of absence and in particular requesting holidays during term time. The authorisation of absence is by the school and there are limited circumstances in which absence can be authorised. When you notify the school of your child's absence it is not automatically authorised.

For absence due to illness, please call the office and use the dedicated absence message line to leave details of your child and reason for absence. If we do not hear from you by 9.30am, we will make contact via text to check the reason for your child's absence. When children are not well enough to attend school, their absence is authorised.

Routine appointments for dentists, opticians or doctors should be made during the school holidays or after school wherever possible. If you have to take your child during school time, please let the office see the appointment card (or notification if electronic) preferably in advance. These appointments will be authorised if an appoint card is provided.

I know the use of fixed penalty notices associated with holidays made many of you unhappy last academic year. Holidays cannot be routinely authorised and you will see from the guidance that the use of penalty notices is expected. It would be beneficial if parents could discuss their intentions to take their child on holiday in advance prior to booking, so that the circumstances are fully understood by the school and the impact on the child's learning can be discussed. In this way it may be possible to reduce the negative impact of absence by avoiding holidays at critical times. I appreciate that for many families the cost of holidays during term time is significantly cheaper. Unfortunately, this is not sufficient reason for them to be authorised.



Absence for events such as birthdays cannot be authorised. However, some one-off events would come under exceptional circumstances- for example religious observance; graduation ceremony; funerals and can be authorised. If you are unsure if the event would fall into this category please discuss it with myself, or (Mrs Copeman or Mrs Price).

Absences are monitored by the Local Authority on a regular basis and further action may be taken if there is a pattern of absence e.g. always absent on Monday or if attendance falls below 90%.

Attendance below 90% is categorised a persistent absence and would be supported by the Educational Welfare Officer meeting with parents to find out if there are issues which are causing the absence. This may identify ways to support your child and family to improve attendance.

We send out an attendance register just before the learning conversations each term. This shows you your child's attendance and the days they have been off school. We are required to share this information with you by the DfE.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Kemble

M Kemble
Executive Head