

30th September 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Important letter about attendance

School target for attendance by end of academic year: 98%

Good attendance and punctuality remain a top priority for Dunbury Academy. We share parents' and carers' views in wanting the best for your child and we look forward to working in partnership with you through the year ahead. We work hard to ensure that your child is supported in school to feel safe, to be the best they can be, and to develop a sense of belonging both with their peers and as part of their wider school community.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a consistent, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. Regular attendance really does matter. Pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

This is how we can work together to achieve good attendance:

Dunbury CE Primary Academy will:

- Monitor the attendance of our pupils and work closely with Dorset Council's School Attendance Service to support children and young people whose attendance levels are causing concern.
- Monitor any attendance below 95% and work quickly with you to improve it.
- Write to you if we are not seeing a rapid improvement, explaining our concerns. The school will then monitor the child's attendance expecting to see an improvement. The Dorset Council (DCC) School Attendance Service will be made aware of the school's concerns. If no improvement is made, the family will be invited to attend an Attendance Panel with a representative from the Local Authority present.
- Understand that children do become ill on occasions. However, children who lose a lot of time at school can suffer in the long term from significant gaps in their learning. We encourage you to carefully consider whether they could manage in school, or whether a whole day of bed rest is genuinely needed. To assist parents in deciding whether their child is too ill to attend school, the NHS have produced a weblink you might find useful: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

- If a child's health continues to affect their education, schools are obliged to make a referral to School Health to ensure that appropriate medical advice and support is provided.

Parents and carers will:

- Take responsibility for your child attending school each day, arriving by 8.45am.
- Take holidays during school holiday periods only, avoiding extended weekend breaks.
- Arrange dental and medical appointments outside of school hours where possible.
- Inform the school **before 8.30am** if your child is too unwell to attend. Please contact the school on each day of absence to inform us. Dunbury operates a system, which means we will contact you to ask why your child is not in school and when they are expected to return, if we have not heard from you.
- Attend parents' evenings and school events.
- Discuss any problems or difficulties with the school as soon as they arise – staff are here to help.

No leave of absence will be granted during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. Should you wish to take your child out of school for any leave of absence, holidays or otherwise, requests will not be routinely granted. It is essential that any requests for leave of absence are discussed with the Headteacher prior to the request being made, and that forms are completed to request the absence.

New national framework for penalty notices

The government requires all schools and academies to follow new statutory guidance related to unauthorised school absences. Under the new national framework, all schools will be required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons. The fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent/carer receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

We hope this information has been helpful and that you understand we are committed to ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to thrive and achieve, recognising that good attendance is central to this.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Richardson and Mrs Duerdoth
Headteacher / Assistant Headteacher and Attendance Lead