

**THIS IS AN IMPORTANT LETTER.  
IT IS VITAL THAT IT IS READ CAREFULLY BY ALL PARENTS**



**St. Andrew's**  
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Dear Parent,

The Trustees and academy committee members of St. Andrew's CE Primary School and Nursery, implement a school policy on punctuality and attendance, including authorised and unauthorised absences in line with national and LA guidelines. High attendance and punctuality are essential if your child is to make the most of their time at school.

Only a Head Teacher, on behalf of the Trustees, can authorise absence. As a general rule, absence can only be authorised if a child is genuinely too ill to attend school. In such circumstances parents are asked to inform school before 10.00 am on the first day of absence.

Authorisation can also be given for medical or dental appointments **provided appointment cards are made available to school**, but parents are asked to make appointments outside of school hours whenever possible. Children who leave school during school hours will be issued with a 'pass out'.

An absence may also be authorised for a child to take part *"in a day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs"*.

School will respond sensitively to requests to attend events such as family weddings or bereavements.

Shopping trips, days out and birthdays are not considered to be an acceptable reason for absence and will be recorded as unauthorised.

Although it is often difficult for a parent who is ill to get their child to school, there are no legal grounds to support absence on this basis. Such an absence would, therefore, normally be recorded as unauthorised.

Punctuality is just as important as attendance. Children are encouraged to come into school at 8.50 am before the bell at 8.55 am when school starts. Children who arrive after the bell at 8.55 a.m. enter via the front door and are recorded.

**If a child arrives after the formal closing of registers at 9.05 am it is recorded as late – after 9.30 am the lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence.**

In line with national and local guidance parents are encouraged to avoid term time holiday. Schools are advised that they can only approve absence for family holidays if there are special reasons which warrant the holiday.

Holiday prices and the fact holidays are booked without first checking with the school cannot be accepted as special reasons. Ten days absence in a school year can result in pupils with poor attendance being officially regarded as persistent absentees. The number of parents who ignore this is a continuing cause for concern.

Government guidelines specify that penalty notices will be issued to parents and carers of children who have a minimum of 20 sessions/10 school days of unauthorised absence in a 12 week period; or a minimum of 10 sessions/5 school days of unauthorised leave in term time or failure to return from authorised leave.

Parents who wish to seek permission to take their children out of school during term time must ask for an application form which must be returned to the Head Teacher on behalf of the Trustees.

It is the policy of St. Andrew's that each request for holiday absence or any other reason should be considered individually and in line with Trust policy, and Government guidance as outlined above.

The number of children arriving in school after the bell at 8-55 a.m. also continues to be a cause for concern. We need everybody to make a conscious effort to improve our records and improve every child's chances of success at school by:

- Making sure your child arrives in the playground at 8.50 am five minutes before the bell.
- Only keeping your child at home if they are genuinely unfit for school.
- Reinforcing the message that school is important and should not be missed.
- Requesting leave of absence as far in advance as possible and only in exceptional circumstances.
- Notifying school of any reasons for absence or lateness as soon as possible.

Thank you for your understanding and co-operation in this vitally important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

