



STICKLAND'S C.E. V.A.

PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents/Carers,

I would like to draw your attention to the following press release from Dorset County Council that will be in the media shortly. Following our visit from the local attendance team, it is clear that the council will be now be much more likely to issue penalty notices.

Whilst the letters state that notices will be issued if requested by the school, I do feel it important that you recognise how much our hands are tied on the issue. We will be having termly visits from the attendance team to monitor attendance registers. As such, any unauthorised absences, such as holidays, will be under scrutiny, and as a school we will be questioned as to what we are doing about them. They will also monitor patterns of absence, for example regular absence on particular days. I am sure that you are also aware that OFSTED look at attendance, which alone can negatively affect any inspections.

Attendance at school is absolutely vital to ensure that your children receive their full educational entitlements, and low attendance can affect attainment. I would ask that you support us in ensuring the regular attendance of your children.

We would also ask that you consider carefully whether to keep your children at home for minor ailments. If they just have a cough, hayfever, or are tired for example, it may be that we have to take a decision NOT to authorise the absence. Consider, for example, whether it would be enough to keep you at home from work. I would urge you to send your child to school, let us know, and we would of course telephone you if we felt your child was too ill to be at school.

The rules regarding stomach bugs still apply: your child must remain absent from school for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.

If you wish to discuss any matters further then please do make an appointment to discuss it with me. I will always urge you to be honest with us as a school. I feel it important to let you know also that if you do decide to take your child away on holiday without telling us the real reason for absence, which later becomes obvious to us, then this would still be recorded as an unauthorised absence.



Once again, I cannot overstate the importance of attendance at school to benefit your child's education, and hope that you will continue to support us in this matter.

Regards,

Kathy McCann

Headteacher.

Avoid taking your children on holiday in term time

As the summer holiday season approaches, Dorset County Council is reminding parents and carers that taking children out of school during term time, without permission from the head teacher, could result in prosecution.

If requested by the school, the county council may issue a penalty notice of £60 for unauthorised absence, which if not paid within 21 days, will double to £120. If this remains unpaid, parents will be prosecuted in the magistrates' court. The law regarding school attendance was clarified recently when the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Isle of Wight Council in prosecuting a father for taking his daughter out of school without permission. It ruled that parents must ensure their children attend school regularly, and that 'regularly' means 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'.

The advice to parents and carers is:

- You must make applications for absences to the head teacher in advance, and these will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- Check what your school's rules are regarding the definition of 'regular' attendance.

Deborah Croney, Dorset County Council's Cabinet member for economy, education, learning and skills, said: "We are asking parents to consider the impact holidays during term time could have on their child's education.

"There is clear evidence that missing school can lead to lower academic achievement. Taking a child on holiday in term time can also interrupt the learning of the whole class, with teachers having to spend time helping children catch up when they return.

"One of our top priorities is enabling children to have the best possible start in life, and a major part of this is education." Find out about school attendance on dorsetforyou.com.