

Attendance Information and Statement for Parents

It is essential that children and young people form good habits of regular attendance at school from an early age and that good attendance is maintained throughout their school career. All schools within the Dorchester Area Schools Partnership (DASP) are committed to working together to ensure that there is a consistent approach to school attendance. It is a legal requirement that all children should attend their educational provision and it is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure that their children attend school.

All schools in DASP have agreed the following:

- It is important that pupils are in school on time. Time keeping is not only important in obtaining maximum benefit from education it is also a key skill for adult life. Lateness is monitored by the school and contributes to absence rates.
- St Osmund's Middle School and DASP 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.
- Whilst we understand that children do become ill on occasion, children who lose a lot of time at school can suffer in the long term from significant gaps in their learning. 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.
- If a child is ill or absent from school it is the responsibility of the parent/carers to ensure that they inform the school. All DASP schools operate a targeted "First Day Call" system, which means they will contact you to ask why your child is not in school and when they are expected to return. Please be aware that schools have a duty to safeguard pupils, failure to inform school or respond to a call from school, may result in your child being reported as missing to police or Children's Services.
- No Leave of Absence will be granted during term time, except in exceptional circumstances. The definition of exceptional circumstances are where requests are rare, significant and unavoidable.
- We are therefore informing parents/carers that, 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 put in writing and discussed with your child's Head Teacher prior to the request being made. Any absence which has not been authorised by your child's school will be recorded as "unauthorised" and this has the potential to impact on your child's overall absence figure and could result in legal action. In line with Dorset Council policy, if a child has 5 days (or 10 sessions) of unauthorised absence (including holiday), a penalty notice of £60 per parent may be issued by Dorset Council, which if not paid within 21 days will increase to £120. If this remains unpaid, parents will be prosecuted in the magistrates' court.

All DASP schools are committed to ensuring that every learner has the opportunity to thrive and achieve, and recognise that good attendance is central to this.

