



Greswell Primary School and Nursery

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Assistant Head: Mrs A Baxendale, Mrs D Whiteley

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the new academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support in helping your child achieve their very best at school. One of the most important factors in a child's success is regular attendance and punctuality, and I would like to remind all families of the significant impact these have on children's learning, progress and wellbeing.

The Importance of Attendance

Attendance is one of the strongest factors in ensuring pupils make good academic progress. Children who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve well, develop positive relationships with their peers, and enjoy a greater sense of wellbeing and belonging within the school community.

Every lesson matters. When children miss school, they miss important teaching, opportunities to practise new skills, collaborative learning experiences and valuable interactions with their friends and teachers. It can often be difficult for children to catch up on learning that has been missed, even when work is provided.

One of the main contributors to absence at our school is family holidays taken during term time. During the last academic year, over 150 children were absent from school due to family holidays, resulting in almost 900 days of learning being missed.

I completely understand that many families are facing financial pressures and that holidays are often considerably cheaper during term time. However, I would strongly encourage all families to plan holidays during the designated school holiday periods wherever possible to minimise the impact on their child's education.

Holidays During Term Time

As a school, we are unable to authorise family holidays during term time except in truly exceptional circumstances.

The Department for Education (DfE) states that headteachers may only grant leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, regardless of the reason given, do not normally meet this threshold and therefore will not be authorised.

The current DfE guidance regarding penalties for unauthorised absence states that:



- A Penalty Notice may be issued if a child misses 10 or more sessions (the equivalent of 5 school days) due to unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period. This includes separate occasions of unauthorised absence, which are added together. Once the total reaches 10 sessions, a Penalty Notice may be considered.
- Initial fine £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- Second Offence: If a second fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, it is automatically set at £160
- Three or More Offences: A third instance will typically bypass the fine stage and result in direct prosecution in the Magistrates' Court

All penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority and school do not receive any financial gain from the process. We must notify the Local authority of all unauthorised absences totalling 10 or more sessions in a 10-week period.

The Importance of Being on Time

Arriving at school on time every day is just as important as attending regularly.

Children who arrive late often miss the start of lessons, particularly mathematics lessons, which take place early in the morning. Missing these key teaching inputs can have a significant impact on progress over time.

In addition, children who arrive after their classmates may miss the important social aspect of the start of the school day. The time before lessons begin allows children to settle, prepare for learning, speak with friends and staff, and start the day feeling calm and ready to learn.

To support children in settling into school each morning, our doors open before the official start time:

EYFS and Key Stage 1

- Doors open: **8.45 am**
- Doors close: **8.55 am**

Key Stage 2

- Doors open: **8.50 am**
- Doors close: **9.00 am**

Persistent Absence

Children whose attendance falls below 94% are discussed at our weekly attendance meetings and their attendance is closely monitored to ensure that any emerging concerns are identified and addressed at an early stage.



Children whose attendance falls below 90% are classed by the Department for Education as persistently absent. This will trigger a formal attendance review and increased monitoring by the school. Pupils in this category may be monitored on a daily basis, and parents may be required to provide additional evidence to support any future absences. Where sufficient evidence is not provided, absences are likely to be recorded as unauthorised in line with school and Department for Education guidance.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality. By working together, we can ensure that every child has the best possible opportunity to achieve their full potential, enjoy school and make the progress they are entitled to.

Mr Cooper

PROUD Headteacher

