Dear Parents/Carers,

We have recently updated our Attendance Policy, which you can find on our school website.

At Broad Oak, we aim to promote and model good attendance so that all our children and staff can be the best they can be. Research shows that children who attend school regularly do much better than their friends that do.

As a parent, you have a legal requirement to make sure that your child is on time each day and has good attendance at school. As adults, we know that life must go on through minor illnesses. Having a cold or a tickly throat doesn’t mean a day off.

However, we know that sometimes children will be off school because:

* They are too ill to get out of bed
* They have a recognised contagious illness such as chickenpox, not just a cough, cold or sore throat.
* They have a medical or dental appointments that can’t be arranged outside school time or in the holidays.
* For religious or cultural observances.
* For bereavement.

All parents and carers should follow our Attendance Policy when reporting absences. Any parent who has not reported their child as absent will be contacted by the school via text message, telephone or home visit on that day. **We may also call or visit even if a reason has been provided if we are concerned about your child’s attendance at school.** Failure to provide a reason for your child’s absence may result in your child receiving an unauthorised absence and this could lead to penalty notices (fines) being issued.

Children should be in school each day if possible. Absences (including holidays) during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Please note that a cheaper cost or the holiday being booked by someone else are not exceptional circumstances. The length of any authorised absences (e.g. for family weddings) will be determined by the headteacher.

If you are taking your child out of school for a reason other than illness, a leave of absence request must be filled in. If your child is not in school and we do not have a reason and cannot contact you, this is a safeguarding concern, and we may need to get in touch with social care.

Being on time is also important at the beginning of the school day. You will be aware that the school day now starts at 8:45 AM and all pupils are expected to be in their classroom at this time.

Registers close at 9:00 am. Should your child arrive after the register closes or enter via the front door, they will receive a late mark. Should your child arrive after 10.00 am, they will be recorded as on-site with an unauthorised absence.

Parents may be issued penalty notices for unauthorised absences including persistent lateness and holidays. Penalty notices are issued to each parent and are per child (not per family). They begin with an initial fine of £60, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Following failure of these payments or in cases of persistent absence, the Education Welfare Service may decide to prosecute a parent. If so, parents can be fined up to £2,500 or imprisoned for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly. This shows how important school attendance is and we will take this action if needed in the best interests of our children.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to get in touch with Mrs Hignett, Mr Affleck, the Pastoral Team or a member of school staff.

**Attendance Matters**

**Why is attendance important?**

* It is a legal requirement for your child to be in school, on time, every day.
* Poor attendance has a negative impact on your child’s learning, outcomes, well-being and mental health.
* Our children benefit from quality learning experiences and deserve the chance to reach their full potential.

**What does attendance look like?**

**97%-100% = Excellent**

**96% - 97% = Good**

**95% - 96% = Average**

**Below 95% = cause for concern**

**When does attendance become a concern?**

* If your child’s attendance falls below 95% attendance will be closely monitored. If your child’s attendance falls below 90%, we will refer to the Education Welfare Service.
* Lateness is also a concern and will be monitored. If your child frequently arrives at school after 8.45 am, we will contact you to discuss this.

**What if my child is ill and unable to attend school?**

* Please inform school each day that your child is unwell and unable to attend school using 01744 752340, Option 1.
* If you do not contact the school prior to 9.30 am, a member of school staff or the Education Welfare Officer may visit your home.
* We may also visit, even if you have provided a reason, if we are concerned about your child’s attendance

**What is an example of an authorised absence?**

* Your child is too ill to attend school. Proof of medical evidence may be requested to support the absence.
* An unavoidable medical appointment. Proof of the appointment will be requested to support the absence.
* Exceptional family circumstances or an agreed Leave of Absence (a Leave of Absence Request form must be completed prior to the absence.
* Days of religious observance.

**What is an example of an unauthorised absence?**

* A family holiday in term time.
* Absence from school because of birthdays or other family celebrations.
* Absence from school because a sibling or parent is unwell.
* Any other similar reasons.