



IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

The school has recently updated the Attendance and Punctuality Policy. Below is a summary of key points for your information.

The Law and Fixed Penalty Notices

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the 'parent' is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age (5 years old or above) receives efficient full-time education. If a parent/carer breaks this law then they may be issued with a fixed penalty.

Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) – The Facts

As an alternative to prosecution, authorised local authority staff, police officers and head teachers can issue penalty notices to parents of children who are not attending school regularly. The penalty is £50 per parent for each child missing school rising to £100 if not paid within 28 days. Failure to pay a penalty fine will result in a prosecution.

Parents and carers could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or, in extreme cases, a jail sentence of up to three months. If the court thinks it will help to stop a child missing school, it may also impose a Parenting Order.

Lateness

Lateness in attending school is an **unauthorised absence** if the pupil arrives after the registration period has ended. The doors open at 8:40am and registration commences at 8:45 a.m. Any child arriving after that time will be recorded as late.

A bell is rung each morning to signify the closure of registration. Any children arriving at school 10 minutes or more after this time will be recorded as a U (unauthorised) in the register. If a child receives more than 4 U codes within a 4 week period the parents/carers will be issued with a fixed penalty notice under Section 444a of the Education Act 1996.

Absences

Absence may only be marked as authorised once the attendance team is satisfied that the reasons given are legitimate. It is important to note that **the decision to authorise an absence is made by the school and not the parent/carer.**

Children should only be absent from school if they are ill, have a medical appointment or have been granted a leave of absence by the attendance team. It is not acceptable, or legal, for children to be absent from school for any other reason.

Holidays

Only ten days (two weeks) may be taken for a family holiday during school time in any academic year. Approval of these days should be sought before a holiday is booked, as permission may not be granted by the school, unless the pupil's attendance in the previous six months is over 95%.

Should a child be absent from school on any dates which have not been granted by the school, for which the school has no notification or which exceed the allowed ten days, then a Penalty Notice may be issued under Section 444a of the Education Act 1996.

If a holiday/leave of absence is requested that is longer than the statutory ten days parents/carers need to be aware that a fixed penalty notice may be issued should the child be absent on any period that has not been granted by the school.

Referring cases to the EWS (Education Welfare Service)

Each half term the school will refer cases for concern to the EWS who will work with them and the family to get the child back into school full time.

Attendance is monitored continually. From the second half of the autumn term onwards, any child whose attendance falls below 85%, regardless of reason is brought to the attention of the EWS and discussed by the attendance team who will notify parents/carers by letter. If a child's attendance falls to 80% or below, or patterns of absence raise suspicions or concerns, the parent/carer will receive a letter notifying them that absences will no longer be authorised without medical evidence being presented.

Phone Contact

The school operates 'first day contact' with parents/carers if no notification for absence has been received. This contact will either be through the 'Text messaging' service to mobile phone or a telephone call.

Notifying the school of an absence

Please contact the school as soon as possible on **0115 9003613** and leave a message if your child will be absent from school.

We understand that at times it can be difficult to achieve full attendance for your child. However it is important to remember it is your legal obligation to do so.

We would like to offer support if you are struggling with any matter relating to school attendance and our Attendance Manager Diana Boulton is available to discuss any issues which may be affecting your child's attendance. Please contact her at the school should you require her support.

*Thank you for your continued support
Ambleside Primary school Governing Body*

12th January 2012