

Graham James Primary Academy

The Sorrells Stanford-le-Hope Essex SS17 7ES

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1st September 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance

Encouraging regular school attendance is one of the most powerful ways you can prepare your child for success - in school and for their future. When you make school attendance a priority, you help your child achieve, develop healthy life habits, avoid unhealthy habits, and have a better chance for success in life.

Children who miss school can often fall behind and do less well as a result. Punctuality is also very important as arriving late will have an impact; it not only means your child misses out on seeing friends before the school days starts, but they also miss the initial input from the teacher of that lesson. Arriving late disrupts the whole class, so we do ask that you ensure your child arrives on time every day.

The Local Authority set attendance targets for us to identify and support children who need help to improve their attendance. Our current target is 96% which can only be achieved if children attend at least 183 out of 190 days over a full school year.

The law

The education act 1996 states that all children of compulsory school age must receive a full time education. As a parent you are legally responsible for ensuring your child attends school regularly. If your child does not attend school regularly you may be issued with an education penalty notice.

Illness

The biggest cause of pupil absence is general illness. Some illnesses such as sickness and diarrhoea, mean your child will have unavoidable time off school. However, many of the minor illnesses such as coughs or colds should not prevent them from attending school. If in doubt, bring your child into school. Children often appear better once taking part in a daily routine. We will contact you if we feel your child is too unwell to stay for the full day. If you need to keep your child at home due to illness, please contact school to inform us of this.

Medical Appointments

Wherever possible, medical appointments should be arranged for times when children are not at school. If this is not possible, please bring your child to school before and after the appointment so that the minimal disruption is caused to their learning. If you do have some evidence of the appointment, such as a letter, appointment card or prescription, please take this to the school office and they will be able to change the absence mark to show you attended a medical appointment.

Holidays

Did you know there are 175 days a year when your child is not at school? This is the best time to take your family on holiday. The school breaks up early in the summer term to enable you to take advantage of discounted holiday rates, so this is a great time to get away.

If you choose to take your child out of school during term time, unless it is an extenuating circumstance, it will be unauthorised and you will most likely be issued a fine. The money from this fine goes directly to the local authority and is used to help improve attendance in Thurrock schools.

If you make the choice to take a holiday during term time, please understand that we are obliged to issue a penalty notice by direction of the DfE.

Early Years

Your child does not legally have to be at school until the term after their 5th birthday. However, when you choose to accept a place in a Nursery or Reception class, it is important that you start to put into place the routines which will last throughout their time at school. This includes being on time every day and attending as regularly as possible. If your child is too ill to attend school, please contact the school office to let them know. Try to avoid keeping your child at home with minor illnesses as they quickly learn what type of illnesses result in a day off school.

Rewards

To promote, encourage and reward good attendance, we will be implementing a number of incentives in the Autumn Term, one of which is a termly raffle. Children's names will be entered into a raffle when their attendance is at or above the school target of 96%. At the end of term, prizes will be drawn. (Attendance certificates will continue to be issued to those children who are at 100% attendance.)

REMEMBER - Regular attendance is necessary for success in school. Help ensure that your child has the best opportunity for success by making sure he/she is in school every day.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

The effect of absence on progress					
A whole year has 365 days; a school year has 190 days. That leaves 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments.					
No absence	10 days absence	12 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence	38 days absence
190 days of education	180 days of education	178 days of education	171 days of education	161 days of education	152 days of education
100%	95%	94%	90%	85%	80%
Very Good Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start.		Worrying Less chance of success. Makes it harder for your child to make progress.		Serious Concern Your child will find it very difficult to make progress.	

Yours Sincerely

J. Conroy

Julie Conroy
 Assistant Head/Attendance Lead