

14th July 2014

Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Dear Parents,

Both schools within the Hanham Primary Federation are aiming to improve school attendance from September 2014. To achieve this we have set a **minimum expectation of 96% attendance for all children in both schools.**

Children's attendance is already monitored and challenged regularly and this will continue. There will however be some changes to the way that we address attendance issues from September 2014:

- The school will challenge all attendance below 95% (currently 90%).
- The school will commission an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor attendance and manage attendance concerns with parents.
- School governors and leaders have agreed to take more robust action in the event of attendance issues for individual children. This will include exercising the use of penalty fines for unauthorised absence.

A penalty fine will be considered when a child has more than 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in any period of 7 school weeks. **A session is half a school day - so this means that more than 5 days absence for a term time holiday, during any 7 week period, is likely to result in a fine** (please see South Glos information sheet: Penalty Notices: Information for Parents and Carers on the school website).

Holidays during term time will continue to be unauthorised unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Children attending weekend sports festivals or tournaments with clubs are discouraged from leaving school early on Fridays. If there is sporting activity on the Friday evening then absence will only be authorised if:

1. Evidence of participation and Friday evening sports activity is provided.
2. Children leave school after 1.30pm.
3. An application is made at least 3 school weeks before the event.

We need your help to ensure that your child has excellent attendance. We recognize that a small number of children experience significant health problems during their school years and this will be taken into account when challenging attendance below 95%.

If you have already booked a term time holiday of more than 5, but not more than 10 days for the 2014-15 school year a fine may be avoided if you can provide evidence of booking prior to Monday 14th July 2014. Please bring this evidence into the school office by Friday 18th July 2014.

MJ Coyne
Primary Headteacher