



SHARPS COPSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Our ref: SCPN Attendance 2023

14th September 2023

Dear Parents and Carers

‘Everyday Counts’

With the start of a new academic year comes the opportunity for us all – staff, parents and children to make ‘**everyday count**’ when it comes to school attendance. We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents and carers of the following guidance and information for the year ahead.

Absences from School

It is really important that any absence is reported to the office on the **first day** to enable us to consider whether it can be **authorised** as children do get poorly and we understand that sometimes they cannot come to school. However, if we do not receive a reason for your child’s absence it automatically gets recorded as **unauthorised**. This can lead to legal action if their lack of attendance becomes persistent and **falls below 90%** at any point during the year ahead. We like to avoid legal action where ever possible as we believe that by following the routine procedures and working together with the right support in place we can help your child attend school every day to achieve their full potential. There is no financial benefit to us or yourselves by taking legal action therefore we would like to encourage you to continue communicating with us whenever your child is absent and taking up any opportunity given to discuss any attendance concerns we or you may have, as we are here to help. Non-engagement is one of the main reasons we refer for legal action.

Holidays During Term Time

Last year we had a record number of children taking a leave of absence (holidays) during term time which, although we understand that they are not only cheaper but after a turbulent couple of years families felt it was important for them to have a break. **Despite this we cannot stress enough the importance of taking holidays during the designated planned school holidays.** Almost half of the families taking holidays last year did not complete the leave of absence request form. It is very important from a safeguarding point of view we are made aware of any planned absences in advance and saves any unnecessary contact from the school whilst you are away. **If a leave of absence form is not completed it will automatically be unauthorised and a fine will be issued.** The leave of absence form also gives you the opportunity to explain any exceptional circumstances for taking the leave during term time, which could lead to its authorisation. Unfortunately, holidays being cheaper during term time, birthdays or visiting families are not **exceptional** circumstances and will be unauthorised.

Fixed Penalty Notices

We would like to remind you a fixed penalty notice may be issued if the unauthorised leave threshold of 5 days (10 sessions) or more is met by their absence. This threshold can also be cumulative within a period of 100 sessions, therefore includes long weekends and day trips. For example, if a child goes away for a long weekend (Friday and Monday) and then within 100 school sessions (50 days) goes away again for another long weekend, with a day trip in between then potentially a fixed penalty notice could be issued as the 5 days of unauthorised absence had been accrued over time. Therefore, please bear this in mind for any planned absences and complete the leave of absence form whether it is for 1 day, 2 days, 5 days or more.

Further Information

More information regarding our expectations, our school attendance policy and the flow charts of actions we follow as part of monitoring your child's attendance are available to view on the school website at www.sharpscapse.hants.sch.uk, as is the leave of absence request form which can be downloaded. These are also available from the school office on request.

Once again, thank you for your continued support in helping us make **'every day count'** with your child's school attendance. Please remember if you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance please do not hesitate to contact our Children & Families Support Worker, Mrs Cutting, who is here to help all our children achieve the best attendance they can this year.

Yours sincerely

M. Elsen
Headteacher