

Attendance advice for parents

Derbyshire County Council is working in partnership with schools to welcome all children back to school in September following several very difficult months for parents, children and schools. We would like to say a heartfelt thank you to parents for the work you have done in ensuring your child/ren have received education during this period.

Now the circumstances have changed and the measures taken by the government have meant that children can safely return to school. It is vital for all children to return to school to minimise, as far as possible, the longer-term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and wider development. We know that children have not only missed out on learning but also missed being with their friends and the wider social aspects of school.

Therefore, the Department for Education has confirmed that school attendance is compulsory again from the beginning of September 2020 when schools re-open after the summer break.

This means from 1st September 2020, the usual rules on school attendance apply, including:

- It is a parent's duty to send their child to school regularly if they are of compulsory school age;
- It is schools' responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence
- The local authority is able to resume the use of legal sanctions, including penalty notices and processes that may lead to prosecution in court for persistent absence.

If you have any concerns about your child returning to school when they re-open in September you should discuss your concerns with the school directly. The school will be able to offer reassurance about the protective measures they have in place, and all schools work closely with health and other agencies who may also be able to help if needed.

Leave of absence in term time (including Family Holidays)

It is essential that children do not miss any further schooling and we strongly discourage parents from taking their child out of school unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is expected that all children in care are in school during term time and that any absences in term time are an absolute exception and requires the approval of the Local Authority in the first instance as joint parental responsibility owners with the parents.

If you do need to remove your child from school you should follow the school request for leave procedures and provide as much information, including evidence to support your case if appropriate. This will enable the Headteacher to make a considered decision and it is important to remember it is the Headteacher's decision whether or

not to authorise an absence request. If you do remove your child from school without the prior permission of the Headteacher this may result in a penalty notice being issued.

Note – penalty notice fines can be issued per *parent per child

*Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 the term 'parent' means

All natural parents, whether they are married or not.

Any person who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility.

Any person who although not a natural parent has care of a child or young person.