

**Coastal Learning Partnership**  
Heathlands Primary Academy  
Andrews Close  
Springwater Road  
Bournemouth  
Dorset  
BH11 8HB



01202 806155  
[office@coastalpartnership.co.uk](mailto:office@coastalpartnership.co.uk)  
[www.coastalpartnership.co.uk](http://www.coastalpartnership.co.uk)

10 September 2021

Dear Parents/Carers

### ***Promoting strong school attendance***

We are delighted to be back from the summer break and I hope that our families are well: a special welcome to those families who are joining a CLP school for the first time.

After the disruption of last year, we are hopeful that things will now feel normal again. As you may know from my July letter, the latest COVID guidance removes many of schools' restrictions. For example, children are not required to work in separate groups or 'bubbles' and contact tracing will now be done by NHS Test and Trace. Schools still have some sensible measures in place such as ventilation, cleaning, hand washing and regular staff testing. Schools will write directly to their parents covering any specific local arrangements.

We are confident that children will quickly enjoy being back at school and will be **encouraging the strongest possible attendance from our children, just as we always do**. Some children and parents may feel particularly anxious about coming back and, if this is the case, I would encourage you to talk to your school as soon as you can. It really is important that we find a way to enable every child to enjoy being at school.

The full attendance policy is on each school's website but here are the important bits.

### **Telling the school if your child is absent**

Parents/carers must contact school on the first day of their child's absence and then each day afterwards. If your child is not at school in the morning and you haven't told them to expect this, then schools must check that your child is safe. Schools will contact parents on the first day that a pupil is absent without explanation. This can be difficult and time consuming – please help them by remembering to make contact from the first day. In this school, this is how you tell us that your child is absent:

Please ring the school by 9.15am at the very latest, leaving a message on the absence line giving a reason for your child's absence. Administrative staff will contact parents on the first day that a pupil is absent without explanation. This contact will usually be a telephone call to the first emergency contact in the first instance. If no response is obtained, the school will endeavor to reach the parent via telephone, working down the list of emergency contacts.

### **Monitoring attendance**

Children's attendance is regularly monitored. Parents will usually be contacted if a child's attendance drops below 96%. Schools work closely with the Local Authority and advice is taken where there are concerns about a child's attendance.

## Requests for absence during term time

Headteachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances (defined as rare, significant, unavoidable and short). Requests should be made using the form available from the school website or office and must be submitted *before* any absence is taken.

As a general guide, the following might be considered as 'exceptional':

- Immediate<sup>1</sup> family weddings, christenings or funerals;
- Immediate family member returning home from Service Duty;
- Occasions of religious observance;
- Other situations where a 'compassionate' element is applicable.

Generally, the following *cannot* be considered 'exceptional':

- Family holidays and breaks, including those missed because of COVID;
- Parents' profession or place of work making it difficult to align school and work holidays;
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time;
- Family birthdays or other events.

After applying for term time absence, parents/carers will be notified of the Headteacher's decision as quickly as possible. **If the absence is not agreed, then it should not be taken.** For such unauthorised absences, the school will request that the Local Authority issues a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Fines are requested in line with the current guidance from the Local Authority and are usually issued on a 'per parent, per child' basis: this means that schools will request a FPN based on the household which requested and/or took the holiday and for both parents<sup>2</sup>. We respectfully remind parents that they should only tell the school that their child is unwell when this is actually the case.

## Lateness

Punctuality is also important: lateness disrupts learning. If a pupil arrives at school after the start of the school day, they will be registered as 'late' (L): this is not an unauthorised absence and the pupil is counted as present for the morning session. Lateness which is 30 minutes or more beyond the start of the school day will be counted as an unauthorised absence (U) unless parents/carers provide the school with an acceptable reason. If your child is persistently late, we will contact you to discuss this.

We are delighted to welcome families back and we are looking forward to helping every child enjoy being part of their school community again. We thank you for your continued support.

Kind regards



Paul Howieson  
Chief Executive Officer, Coastal Learning Partnership

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Immediate' defined as parents and siblings

<sup>2</sup> 'Parents' defined as any adult in the household who has care of the child including ensuring regular attendance