



FLORENCE MELLY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

IN SCHOOL, ON TIME, EVERY DAY!

IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN DO IT!



Tuesday 10th September 2024

Dear parents/carers,



As the Attendance and Designated Safeguarding Lead for Florence Melly, I'd like to take the opportunity myself, to welcome you all back to school.

As we have returned from the summer holidays and started this new academic year just last week, I wanted to write to you to emphasise the critical importance of maintaining consistent attendance and punctuality. We have an enhanced focus on school attendance this year and want to work in partnership with you to make, 'every second count' for your children.

High attendance rates are strongly linked, in the long-term, to success and future opportunities in life overall. If a child is not in school, they simply cannot be exposed to the exciting and varied opportunities for learning we offer here at Flo Melly and the impact of this can be significant. Of course, there will be occasions when your child may be too ill to attend school - we completely understand that!

The NHS have produced this handy guide, which you may find useful: [Is my child too ill for school?](#)

Letting us know...

Just as a reminder, we must be provided with a reason for each occasion of absence. Without a reason, an absence must be recorded as unauthorised. Please contact the school to report your child's absence - School Office/Absence Line on: 0151 226 1929. Please make sure you call every day your child is absent.

I would also like to remind you that, where possible, medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours; where this cannot be avoided, providing evidence of the appointment is the only way to ensure that the time missed from school, is authorised.

Levels of absence in schools are closely monitored not only at a school level, but also by the Local Authority and the Department for Education. We are legally obliged to report our school attendance data on a daily basis, and as such, must justify all non-attendance with reasons for absence.

Holidays...

Working in school ourselves, the ability to take our families away for a break, is limited solely to the planned school holidays. Whilst we both understand and sympathise with the huge differences between prices available during term time, and the inflated cost of those taken during the school holidays, we strongly advise against arranging holidays during term time. Should you do so, please be prepared to receive a fine. Here are our school term dates for this year: [Term Dates 2024/25](#).

We appreciate that there are times when parents/carers will need to request a leave of absence for their children. Any request for a leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and these must be outlined in writing or sent by email to our Headteacher at, a.leach@fmp.liverpool.sch.uk so that each request may be considered on its own merits. The definition provided by the DfE for an authorised leave of absence, is "rare, short and unavoidable". Whilst we always aim to work with parents to ensure the wellbeing of our children and their families, we will be unable to authorise absences outside of truly exceptional circumstances. Please be advised that any absences outside of the above circumstances will be classed as unauthorised and could be subject to a fine from the Local Authority.

Pupils that are persistently absent...we are here to help!

We will continue to closely monitor attendance in school and, where we see attendance falling close to the 90% threshold (which is classed by the Department for Education, as being persistently absent) you will be

contacted to discuss to see if we can provide any support. If you are having difficulties getting your child to school, please contact us, so we can work together to improve things.

From the table below, with percentages translated into actual school days missed, you can see the significant impact that being absent from school has on your child's education over a school year:

| Attendance | Days missed | Lessons missed | School Weeks missed |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| 100% | 0 days | 0 | 0 weeks |
| 95% | 10 | 40 | 2 weeks |
| 90% | 19 | 76 | 3 weeks 4 days |
| 85% | 28 | 112 | 5 weeks 3 days |
| 80% | 37 | 148 | 7 weeks 2 days |

We have an Education Welfare Officer allocated to support our school with attendance. We also work closely with other agencies to ensure that families are given the support needed to attend school and we will try hard to support individual cases. However, every child is entitled to an education and it is a legal requirement under the 1988 Education Act to attend school. We have formal procedures to follow if poor attendance continues. Furthermore, we also have a duty of care to ensure that every child is safe and has been seen in school. Home visits will be conducted if there are any concerns or queries regarding absence and Children's Services/Agencies will be contacted if necessary.

Changes to Local Authority and national attendance regulations

All schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more consecutive (morning or afternoon) unauthorised sessions (5 days), including unauthorised holidays taken in term time. If your child is absent for 5 days or more and you are unable to provide evidence for your child being unwell or an authorised reason for absence, you will likely incur a fine.

From 1st September 2024, the fine for school absence across the country will be £160 per parent, per child, this will reduce to £80 if paid within 21 days.

If a parent receives a second fine within any three-year period, this fine will not be reduced and be due at the higher rate of £160 per parent, per child.

Punctuality

Good punctuality at school is essential for pupils to achieve their full educational potential. It is also vital for pupils to form good habits for later life. All pupils are expected to arrive punctually for school in the morning, by 9am.

Our doors open at 8.45 and close at 9am. This is the time our school day begins. According to these guidelines, registers must be closed after a certain time in the morning. Therefore, if a pupil arrives after 9.30am, they cannot receive a late mark, but have to be marked as absent for the whole morning session. If the lateness is due to a legitimate reason e.g. a medical appointment, the absence can be authorised. Otherwise, the session is marked as an unauthorised absence.

If your child arrives after registration they will be marked as late. If your child does not arrive at school before 09.30am, they will be marked as absent for the whole morning session.

If you have any concerns, worries or questions regarding your child's attendance or punctuality then please speak to your child's teacher or our Attendance Team.

With thanks, in anticipation of working together to ensure that all of our children are in school, on time, every day.

Mrs Sainsbury
Designated Safeguarding Lead and Attendance Lead

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