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Dear Parents/Carers,

We believe passionately that every school day matters in a child's education. This is backed up by plenty of research to show how crucial regular attendance is in ensuring children reach their full potential in our education system and develop into confident, well-rounded adults who are equipped for life.

What is good attendance?

There are 190 school days each year. Research has indicated that to ensure a child fully achieves their potential, they should be in school for at least 95% of this time (180 days). If a child is taken out of school for a two-week holiday in term time then any further absences, e.g. through illness, this will immediately put that child below the 95% threshold. The government states that a child who falls below 90% attendance is classed as persistently absent. The national average attendance for 2016-2017 was 96%.

Can I take my child out of school for a holiday in term time?

Headteachers have the authority to approve up to 10 school days in the course of an academic year for family holidays. All requests for term-time absence must be submitted in writing to the Headteacher. The Department for Education states that Headteachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.

What do I do if my child is absent from school?

Parents have a responsibility to inform the school if their child is absent and to provide a valid reason for the absence. We encourage parents either to ring the school (01347 810230) or contact us by email (admin@sutton-on-the-forest.n-yorks.sch.uk) as early as possible on the first day of the absence. If your child does not arrive at school and we have not had any contact, the school will endeavour to establish why the child is not at school, in line with our safeguarding policy.

What about lateness?

The law states that parents are legally required to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time. Persistent lateness is dealt with in much the same way as irregular attendance. Persistent lateness can be every bit as harmful to a child's education as missing school. We encourage all children to be at school before 8:55am.

How do we deal with persistent absence?

We run a termly report on each child's attendance for every child from Reception Class upwards. We will make contact with parents of children whose attendance is becoming a cause for concern. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the reasons for any absence and to identify any support the school or outside agencies can give to ensure the child's attendance improves.

What can I do as a parent?

As parents, we all want the very best for our children, and key to this is a good education. We are proud of what we do for our pupils here at Sutton-on-the-Forest CE Primary School. We endeavour to provide educational experiences tailored to a child's developmental needs and which feed their interests, enthusiasm and specific abilities and talents. For this to work, they need to be with us for as much of the journey as possible, so we urge that, as parents, you:

- ensure that your child arrives at school on time each day;
- ensure that your child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance;
- always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning of any absence;
- try to avoid booking family holidays during term-time;
- talk to the school if you are concerned that your child may be reluctant to go to school.

We need to ensure that they make the most of their childhood; to be curious, to thirst for knowledge and new experience, to enjoy and celebrate their progress, to find their place in the world, and to ready themselves for a life filled with potential. I hope you feel the same and will support us in our attempts to ensure that your child has the very best start on their lifelong learning journey.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Pye
Headteacher