



Wyton on the Hill Primary School
Cambridge Square
Wyton on the Hill
Huntingdon
Cambs.
PE28 2JB
Tel: 01480 572995

E-mail: office@wyton.cambs.sch.uk

Website: <http://www.wytonprimaryschool.org.uk>

Head teacher: Ms Jo Phillips
8th November 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

'Persistent absence' explained

We know that as parents and carers who want the best for your children, you will understand that regular attendance at school is important. Failing to attend school regularly can have a major impact on children's education, their future and their life chances. Regular attendance means attending school every day, arriving at school on time and attending every lesson. Government research indicates that 17 missed school days a year can result in a drop in achievement in terms of end of phase examinations and assessments.

As a Local Authority maintained school, we are required to remind parents that all the expectation for attendance for all children is 100%, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence, which would then be authorised. Our attendance data is open for monitoring by the Local Authority and we are expected to be able to show that we have taken action to reduce 'persistent absence' where it occurs, including in cases of persistent lateness (which is also reflected in children's attendance records).

This letter outlines the school's position on 'persistent absence' as a Local Authority maintained school. We hope parents find it informative.

From September 2015, the Department for Education has set the threshold for persistent absence at 10% or higher (in other words, an attendance percentage of 90% or below).

Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for ensuring their child (from age 5 to age 16) receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.

Parents who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly without good reason could:

- Receive a Penalty Notice Fine of £60 per parent per pupil
- Be prosecuted in the magistrate's court and be fined up to £1,000
- In more serious offences, where parents have been previously prosecuted they could be fined up to £2,500 or face imprisonment

At Wyton on the Hill, we operate the Local Authority's 'Three-Letter System', which is designed to help parents avoid legal action by alerting them to the fact that their child's attendance is concerning before it reaches the 'persistent absence' threshold.

Please see the table over the page, which outlines the 'Three-Letter System' for parents and also has some surprising facts about the impact of absence on learning in term of hours lost. In order to ensure that parents are kept informed, our school system for recording attendance will generate the three letters whether or not the absences are authorised or unauthorised.

	Threshold Attendance	Actual Attendance	Whole Days Absent	Learning Hours Lost	Action parents can expect from the school
Excellent	100%	190	0	0	Pupils achieving 100% attendance receive a Head teacher's award in an end of the year assembly.
	99%	188 days	2	10	
Good	98%	186 days	4	20	Good attendance appears as 'Green light' and is reflected in the percentage mark of 96-99% on pupils' end of year reports.
	97%	184 days	6	30	
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5	
Requires Improvement	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5	The school's system for recording attendance will send out Local Authority Letter One : This is sent to parents as an early alert that a significant number of learning hours have been lost and offers support.
	94%	177 days	13	65	The school's system for recording attendance will send out Local Authority Letter Two : This letter is sent to request a meeting and to alert parents that medical evidence is now required for any future absences to be authorised with immediate effect. Support will be offered.
	92%	175 days	15	75	The school's system for recording attendance will send out Local Authority Letter Three : This letter informs parents that their child's attendance as nearing the 'persistent absence' threshold and that if attendance fails to improve during the next 6 weeks, the case may be referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for possible legal intervention. Support will be offered.
'Persistent Absence'	90%	171 days	19	95	The school's system for recording attendance will refer the case to the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) .
	89%	169 days`	21	105	
	89% and below	167 days and below	23	115	

If your child is absent and the school either does not receive an explanation from you, or cannot authorise the absence, it will record your child's absence as 'unauthorised'. Most absences for acceptable reasons will be authorised.

Acceptable for absence reasons include:

- ✓ Sickness (see above for reasonable guideline percentages);
- ✓ Unavoidable medical or dental appointments (if possible, arrange these for after school or during school holidays);
- ✓ Days of religious observance;
- ✓ Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement (within reason);
- ✓ An interview / visit with a prospective school

If you would like to request leave of absence in term time for one of these exceptional reasons, please contact the School Office for a form. Or you can find one on the school website.

However, we are not permitted to authorise absence for the following reasons:

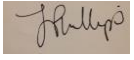
- ✓ Shopping during school hours;
- ✓ Day trips;
- ✓ Holidays in term time;
- ✓ Birthdays;
- ✓ Looking after brothers or sisters or ill relatives.

If you are not sending your child to school because you know or think that your child is having difficulties attending school you should contact the class teacher in the first instance. It is better to

do this sooner rather than later, as most problems can be dealt with very quickly and we want our children to have the best possible experience in school.

If you would like any help or support, or would like to discuss any of the points raised in this letter, please make us your first port of call – our door is always open.

Yours sincerely,

A small, square, light brown stamp containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jo Phillips".

Jo Phillips (Head teacher)