



WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL  
**SUMMERLEA C.P. SCHOOL**



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*'Growing thoughtful learners and independent thinkers'*



Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Dear Parents and Carers,

***Be kind  
 Be safe  
 Be ready***

At Summerlea, we pride ourselves on our excellent attendance and punctuation. In the year 2018 - 2019 we achieved an attendance figure of 95.9% as a whole school. This puts us in line with the national average of 96% in the year 2017-18. Our whole school target for 2019-20 is 97%.

Our aim for all pupils is to provide a high quality education in a safe and caring environment to enable everyone to excel. Our pupil *Happy & Safe Survey 2019* showed us that our pupils enjoy coming to school.

We do expect all pupils to arrive on time every day. We are proud that they understand these values and responsibilities. In school, we recognise good attendance and will always support families in achieving this.

Research shows that regular attendance and good punctuality play a huge part in children achieving their full potential at school and later in life.

There are 190 days in an academic school year and many parents are surprised how quickly days off can accumulate.

90% attendance in a school year = 19 days (almost 4 weeks) of learning time lost  
 80% attendance = 38 days (approx. half a term) of learning time lost

In total, there are 175 non-school days a year. This gives families the opportunity to:

- Spend time together
- Go on family visits and days out
- Go on holiday
- Go shopping
- Attend routine appointments

All absence at any stage of a child's schooling leads to gaps in your child's learning. This in turn can:

- mean that they fall behind in work
- affect their motivation
- affect their enjoyment of learning



- lead to poor behaviour
- affect their desire to attend school regularly
- affect their confidence in school
- mean they miss out on the social life of school and extra-curricular opportunities and experiences
- affect their ability to have or keep friendships
- make them feel embarrassed
- develop bad habits that affect employability

***We regularly monitor the attendance of all of our pupils and may write to you if your child's attendance falls below 95%.***

Many parents appreciate us letting them know so quickly. We always prefer working directly in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that children attend school every day and on time. We have to report our attendance to West Sussex Local Authority who work with us to maintain good and punctual attendance.

<b>Average attendance per year group since the start of the autumn term 2019</b>	
<b>EYFS</b>	N/A as not all pupils are statutory school age
<b>Year 1</b>	97.5 %
<b>Year 2</b>	97.8%
<b>Year 3</b>	96.8%
<b>Year 4</b>	97.4%
<b>Year 5</b>	96.2%
<b>Year 6</b>	96.5%

### **Sickness**

Whilst we fully understand that sickness and medical appointments etc account for the vast majority of absences in school (and these absences can *never* be avoided; a child's health and wellbeing must always come first), we do always encourage and strive for as regular and as punctual attendance as possible.

Sickness absence should always be reported to the school office, preferably by telephone, prior to the beginning of the school day so that all children are accounted for as quickly as possible each morning. If we do not know why a child is absent from school when registration closes, a member of our office team will phone that child's home and additional contact numbers to ascertain a reason for absence and to ensure their safety. **If parents and carers do not keep us informed of a child's absence, this can cause us concern and a great deal of time in school. We really appreciate your co-operation in reporting absences and ensuring that we have at least two, up to date, contact names and numbers.**

### **Lateness**

Late arrivals, as well as absence at school, have a negative effect upon a child's attendance figures and if occurring regularly, can be very disruptive to their learning, and progress. Some children become very self-conscious and this impacts on their self-esteem if they regularly miss the very start of the school day with the rest of their class. If your child arrives after 8:30 am, once the classroom doors are closed, they will need to enter through the front office and parents will be asked to complete a late slip.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

The school does not permit holidays to be taken during term time. Parents should be aware that the law now enforces the position regarding holidays. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013, state that the Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Our locality group of schools have produced leave of absence guidelines which can be found on our website and at the end of this letter.

If you need to take your child out of school, you will need to **complete and return** an absence request form from the school office in advance of the planned absence.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is a fine given for unauthorised absences from school, rather than the matter being brought before the courts. It is issued per parent, per child. In West Sussex, the Local Authority issues them through Pupil Entitlement.

FPNs are used when a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 10 school week period; a school day is two sessions AM and PM. This includes; any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.

Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

A holiday in term time which has not been authorised by the Head Teacher is recorded as unauthorised.

FPNs can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.

Please take the time to read our Attendance Policy so that you are familiar with what steps we are taking to improve attendance and punctuality of all pupils. The policy can be found at: [www.summerlea.w-sussex.sch.uk](http://www.summerlea.w-sussex.sch.uk) under 'School Information – Policies'

If you have any further questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact the office and ask.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs K Strong  
Deputy Headteacher



# Littlehampton Locality

Date: June 2018  
Title: Locality Leave of Absence Guidelines

## Leave of absence in exceptional circumstance

Headteachers may only grant leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. The following examples of acceptable and unacceptable exceptional circumstances have been drawn up collectively by the Headteachers of the schools in the Littlehampton Locality.

However every request will be considered on an individual basis and will take into account:

- The specific circumstances relating to the request
- The impact on the pupils academic progress
- The pupil's attendance over the academic year
- Whether the leave falls within any key stage national tests or exams.

## Examples of exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time:

- Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – Headteachers should use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence - up to a maximum of 3 days.
- Serious illness of a close relative – only if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement and agreed by the LA – as appropriate.
- Time-off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs”. This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions. Headteachers may specify that only one day will be authorised at a time (most of the families who request leave on religious grounds are Muslim and the request is for the two Eids).
- Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding. Each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

## Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:-

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Pilgrimages by parents (eg. Hajj). These are rare but can result in children being away from school for significant periods of time (at least 5 days). They are not regarded as exceptional as children themselves do not perform Hajj, but tend to travel with their parents when they go.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost / parental work commitments, with the exception of emergency services personnel with statutory leave restrictions.