



Archbishop Courtenay
Church of England
Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs S Heather
Chair of Governors: R O'Connell

Tuesday 3rd January

Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a very Happy New Year!

You will no doubt be aware of the recent press release from the UK Health Security Agency, reminding people that winter illnesses continue to circulate at high levels.

To minimise the spread of infections in schools the message suggests children should stay at home if they have a fever – this guidance is not new as schools have always urged parents to keep children at home if they have an infection. However, now more than ever, it is vital that we work together to ensure that the school setting can function at its fullest, therefore if your child has a temperature try and seek medical advice and keep them in the warm until they are better.

If your child has not had the flu vaccination and you would like to protect them please visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/child-flu-vaccine/>

On a contradictory note, attendance remains a priority for our school and indeed the Department of Education who have also issued guidance for schools and parents, which I attach.

For some children, and families, we understand attending school every day will be harder than for others. This is why we are committed to working with you to solve problems and support your child's attendance. We recognise that some absences are unavoidable, but it is important that your child attends school every day they can to impact their learning, wellbeing and development, allowing them to thrive and flourish at primary school and beyond.

Getting your child to school might be challenging for many reasons... maybe they are anxious, there is an issue at home, there is a worry in school, you're unsure if they are poorly enough to stay at home or maybe you live a distance away and have a problem with transport, your first step is to talk to us.

We will do everything we can to get you the right support by:

- Listen to your concerns
- Working with you to make reasonable adjustments to help your child attend
- Ensure your child receives the right pastoral care in school
- Where possible collect your child from home on a short-term basis
- Offer home visits to meet with you and your child to discuss attendance
- Work jointly with other services including the local authority, health and social services

However, if your child is absent from school without permission or a valid reason, you are likely to be breaking the law. Where this happens, we will speak to you to understand the reasons. If your child



The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust

Unit 33, Folkestone Enterprise Centre, Shearway Business Park, Shearway Road, Folkestone Kent CT19 4RH

Registered Company N°. 9035788

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hasn't attended because they are struggling to, both the school and the local council will put the right support in place to help you.

If you do not take part in that support, or it doesn't work because more structured formal support is needed, then school or the local council may:

- Invite you to agree to a parenting contract. This is not a punishment or a criticism of your parenting. It is a more formal action plan that sets out what you will do to improve your child's attendance and what your child's school and/or your local council will do to support this.

- Apply to the family court for an education supervision order to ensure you and your child receive advice, assistance and direction to make sure they receive a suitable full-time education. If you do not make any efforts to improve your child's attendance or it is clear you have knowingly allowed your child to be absent without good reason – for example, taking your child on holiday in school time without permission – your local council may prosecute you to protect your child's right to a full-time education. Even during this process, you have the opportunity to accept and engage in voluntary support (such as an early help assessment) or formal support (such as a parenting contract or education supervision order) to prevent the case from going to court. If found guilty you may be given a parenting order, community order, a fine of up to £2,500 or in very exceptional circumstances a sentence of up to 3 months in prison.

Let us work together to improve attendance for all our pupils in 2023 and if you need any help please speak to us, as I have said before, do not suffer in silence.

Yours sincerely,

Sue Heather

Headteacher



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