



Ref: JWT/FS

9 November 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians

Earlier this year, Ofsted have asked us to take action to improve our attendance figures. We have recently carried out a review of last year's attendance data and our current procedures to identify areas where improvements can be made. Some of our findings are:

1. In some cases, parents are not following the school procedure for absences. This means we sometimes are not communicating well enough.
2. There is a very clear link between attendance and academic progress. Last year, the students with the highest Progress 8 score had attendance above 97%. This is similar to some research that confirms that if a child improves their attendance by 1% they could see a 5-6% improvement in their attainment.
3. A surprising proportion of absence at Oldbury Wells is for illness. This may sound strange, but actually, 4.72% of our absence last year was for illnesses compared to 2.5% nationally. Because of this, we felt it was a good idea to give you our guidance about illness and absence reporting. Please see the second page of this letter for this guidance.

We realise that there may be occasions when your child will be too ill to attend school. However, it is our duty to support good attendance and help parents ensure that their child is not at risk of being classed as 'persistently absent'.

If a child has less than 90% attendance, the Department for Education classes them as being persistently absent from school. To help ensure that we are communicating effectively with parents whose child may be at risk of being classed as persistently absent, school will usually make initial contact when attendance falls below 95%. If attendance continues to fall below 93%, Mrs Chafer, our Education Welfare Officer, will usually make contact with parents to discuss the type of support they may require to help their child attend school more often.

Please contact your child's Head of Year, if you would like to discuss any matters relating to attendance.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support and partnership.

Yours sincerely

Mr J White

Assistant Headteacher

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## Illness and Absence Reporting

We realise that there may be occasions when your child will be too ill to attend school.

However, your child could go to school, if they have one of the following symptoms:

- Headache
- Earache
- Stomach ache
- Cough
- Cold
- Sore throat

Should this be the case, you could give them paracetamol and plenty of fluids to drink before school, in addition to writing a note in their planner, so teachers are aware that they have one of the symptoms listed above.

As you will be aware, teachers and other school staff will usually attend work if they have a cough, cold or sore throat, as would most parents.

If your child has diarrhoea or is vomiting, they need to be kept off school until they are better. However, as in all cases of illness, parental judgement should be used to decide whether to keep the child off school and for how long. If the vomiting is caused by an allergy or travel sickness, it may not be necessary for the child to have time off school.

I would also like to remind you of our procedure for children who have unexplained absences from school.

There have been public cases in the past where schools have not chased up the reasons as to why children are not in school. It has then transpired that there have been tragic circumstances around these absences, for example, illness of a parent and a child unable to seek help.

We will do everything we can to prevent such situations occurring, as I am sure you would agree that your child's safety is paramount to us all.

If your child is not going to be in school, please call the absence line on 01746 765454 (Option 1) or email Mrs Sawyer, our Attendance Officer, at [Karen.Sawyer@oldburywells.com](mailto:Karen.Sawyer@oldburywells.com) to report their absence. Please do this before 8.40am on the first day of the absence and on every other day of absence that follows.

If we have not heard from you by 8.40am, a text message will be sent, asking you to confirm your child is absent. Should you not reply to this text message, we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence. If we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is, then we will make a home visit. Following a home visit, if we still have not been able to get a response, we will report this matter to the Police and your child will then be classed as a 'missing child'.

This procedure is to ensure that we know where your child is and that you are all safe. Please let us know in good time why your child is absent from school, if they are unable to attend.

Where possible, dentist and medical appointments should be made outside of school time. Any medical appointments taking place during school time should be written in the student planner and shown to the child's Form Tutor or Mrs Sawyer. Any requests for a leave of absence must be made in writing to Mrs Godden, our Executive Headteacher. Parents should be aware that holidays during term time cannot be authorised.

Finally, please ensure that if you move house or your contact details change, school are made aware of this at the earliest opportunity.

Thank you in advance for supporting Oldbury Wells School and your child by following these guidelines.

Yours sincerely



Mr J White

Assistant Headteacher