



HILLTOP JUNIOR SCHOOL
Hill Avenue, Wickford, Essex SS11 8LT
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18 June 2015

Dear Parent/Carers

I am writing to inform you of the forthcoming changes to the persistent absence threshold. From 1 September 2015, the Government is reducing the threshold from 15% to 10%. This will now class a student with attendance below 90% as a persistent absentee, compared with the previous figure of 85%, regardless of whether the school has authorised or unauthorised the absence. This equates to 38 sessions or 19 days of absence across the year.

Schools are no longer judged solely on their overall attendance figures but also on the number of students who fall into the persistent absence category.

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to fulfil their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure that regular attendance is maintained. The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. This highlights the fact that there will be an impact on your child's education and exam results if attendance is not consistently above 95% throughout their schooling.

Minor ailments, such as a headache or slight cold, are not acceptable reasons for failing to attend school. Repeated absences may require the school to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery or local pharmacy as recommended by the Government.

I would also like to remind you that the law does not give any entitlement to parents to remove their child from school during term-time for the purpose of a holiday. Headteachers may only grant leave of absence where an application has been made in advance and the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

We will be providing details of your child's attendance with their school report. We are confident that you will be keen to work with us to ensure that your child meets the new threshold requirements since it is clear that this will have a positive effect on their learning.

Thanking you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs A J Waite
Headteacher