

# **Eastcombe Primary School**

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Head Teacher: Mrs C Jones

Office staff: Mrs J Woodman & Mrs B Ulett

Thursday, 05 January 2023

Dear Parents,

The Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan is committed to improving attendance levels in schools which have fallen since the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to a decline in school attendance nationally, the Department for Education (DfE) issued new guidance for schools titled 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' in September 2022. The DfE have also implemented a new reporting system which schools are using to share their attendance data daily, enabling an accurate national picture of attendance in schools.

All schools are expected to proactively manage and improve attendance as good attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils and should be seen as everyone's responsibility. It is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

## **Every day and every minute count.**

Attending school every day = 100% attendance

Attending 4½ days a week = 90% attendance = 4 weeks missed per year

Attending 4 days a week = 80% attendance = more than half a term missed per year

Attending 3½ days each week = 70% attendance = more than a quarter of the school year missed

An average attendance of 80% or less across a child's school career adds up to missing a whole 2 years from school.

Being late for school reduces learning time:

If your child is 5 minutes late every day they will miss three days of learning each year.

If your child is 15 minutes late every day they will miss two weeks of learning each year.

Here at Eastcombe Primary School we are working hard to improve our attendance figures as they follow the national trend and are much lower than pre-pandemic levels. We are tracking the attendance data for the whole school, and individual pupils. We are trying to identify barriers to children attending school and offer support to individuals and families where necessary. To give you an idea of the challenge we are facing, **70% of the pupils at Eastcombe Primary School have an attendance figure of 95% or lower.**

We accept and understand that there has been a significant amount of illness amongst the school community and want to reassure you that absence due to illness is authorised. If your child is too poorly to attend school, then they should stay at home until well enough to return.

## **Strategies we are employing to raise the profile of attendance at Eastcombe Primary School.**

Staff and Governors are working together on improving attendance. We have this as a focus area on our school development plan and have identified the following strategies to implement. Some strategies are already in place and others will be implemented as the year continues:

- Report attendance at each parent's evening (Autumn and Spring)
- Report attendance on the end of year school report (Summer)

- Report attendance termly on our new assessment slips (each child received one of these at the end of the Autumn Term)
- Send termly texts to parents of pupils with an attendance figure of 95% or below, putting this percentage figure into number of days lost. These texts will come at the start of each new term (Autumn, Spring and Summer)
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance, potential barriers and ways to support
- Offer personalised support plans for pupils where necessary
- Signpost parents to external support agencies as required
- Re-write our attendance policy in line with new DfE guidance
- Seek support and advice from Local Authority 'Attendance network and support meetings'
- Seek advice from professional agencies where required e.g. Social Care, Early Help, GP's
- Collect pupil voice
- Track attendance weekly as a whole school figure. We aim for **90-95%** and we are currently placed between **84-86%**
- Mrs Jones to attend both national and local training sessions with a focus on improving attendance and implementing different techniques and good practice

I re-iterate that if your child is too poorly to attend school then they need to be at home until well enough to return. We will continue to share good practice guidance and advice on childhood illnesses, Covid-19 and Strep A as we get it.

Improving attendance is a partnership and shared responsibility. I hope you have found this information both interesting and thought provoking. If you have any further comments or ideas, then please contact me to discuss further as your feedback is always welcome.

I look forward to a healthier term and pupil attendance figures slowly rising where possible.

Yours in partnership,

*C.L. Jones*

Mrs Jones