

20th November 2023

Dear Parent(s)/ Carer(s),

I wanted to take the opportunity to send a reminder about our attendance expectations and our policies and procedures in relation to student absence.

Gerrans Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance by all. Only by attending school regularly, and punctually, will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Attendance at school is important and research shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades. At Gerrans Primary School we encourage all students to strive for 100% attendance; every day and every lesson counts.

Our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our students receive the most from their education and reach their full potential. This letter is to remind all parents/carers regarding the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. All schools in the country must follow Department for Education guidance regarding attendance and it clearly states that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children’s attainment. Dental and medical appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible.

Here at Gerrans Primary School, we recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence, such as when a student is genuinely too ill to attend school, has a medical appointment that cannot be taken outside of school hours or a request for leave has been agreed in exceptional circumstances. However, the Government does not support parents taking children out of school unless the school agrees this is appropriate under exceptional circumstances. Any request for leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher using the school’s request form.

**If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates’ Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.**

‘Parent’ as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and; any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

You are welcome to contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have regarding this or if you feel you would like advice or support in helping your child attend more regularly. Gerrans Primary is committed to maximising the education of all its students and aims to work with parents to ensure this can be achieved.

Yours sincerely



Kate Douglass

**Executive Headteacher**