



Langley Road,
Newton Hall,
Durham,
DH1 5LP

Headteacher : Mrs. L. Frazer B.A. (Hons.)
Deputy Headteacher : Mrs A. Cooke B.Ed. (Hons.)

Tel: 0191 3861203

Email: newtonhall@durhamlearning.net

Website: durhamnewtonhall.durham.sch.uk

Attendance letter to parents

Dear Parents and Carers,

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Newton Hall Infants' School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

We want the children at our school to enjoy coming each day and although we recognise that children can be unwell at times throughout the year we want our children to attend school so that they can access every opportunity offered to them throughout the school day.

Research has proven that there is a high correlation between school attendance and academic performance and success. Absence from school is often the greatest single cause of poor performance and achievement.

Why is it so important to attend every day?

- Learning is a progressive activity; each day's lessons build upon those of the previous day.
- Reading the material and completing work independently does not compensate for direct interaction with the teacher and the other children
- Many teachers use discussions, demonstrations, experiments, visitors and participation as part of the daily learning activities, and these cannot be made up by those who are absent.

Are there other benefits to my child?

- Children with good attendance records generally achieve higher results and enjoy school more.
- Having a good education will help to give your child the best possible start in life.
- Regular school attendance patterns encourage the development of other responsible patterns of behaviour.

What are the risks of frequent absences?

- A child who does not attend school regularly will be unlikely to keep up with the work.
- The more children miss school, the lower their results and the less they want to stay in school.

What can parents do to help?

- Parents must model the value of education, including the importance of regular attendance.
- Make sure that your child goes to school regularly and arrives on time and you will establish a good habit that they will carry through life.
- If your child starts missing school, work with the school to put things right. Make sure your child understands that you do not approve of him/her missing school.
- If your child is ill or must miss school for some other reason, contact school immediately.

- Please do not expect school to approve of shopping trips, birthday treats etc. during school hours. Arrange family holidays so that your child will not miss any learning.
- Take an interest in your child's school work and be involved in the school as much as possible - your child will value school more if you do. School offers opportunities for parents to find out about what the children are learning about in school throughout the year.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

From 1st September 2013, a change to government legislation means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time.

Requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are "exceptional circumstances" and holidays are not considered exceptional. If you take a leave of absence without the school's permission, and this absence amounts to 7 days or more, you could receive a penalty notice. Requests for leave must be made to the Headteacher in advance, as the Department for Education has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.

Penalties for Persistent Absence (Less than 90% attendance)

A penalty notice is a fine to parents or carers if they fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly. We consider this to be a last resort. Generally before such action is taken we will have raised our concerns over attendance with you and / or the Educational Welfare Officer. It is vital that you cooperate with the School where there are attendance concerns.

If a penalty notice is issued, it will be one fine to cover the whole period of the absence. So the fine would be the same amount for an absence of five days or 10 days. For example, a parent could be issued with £60.00 fine if their child misses one day of school each week over a five week period, whilst another parent might be issued the same fine for one two-week block of absence. Please note that both parents with parental responsibility will receive a separate notice.

Penalty fines are £60.00 per child per parent if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the fine is not paid, parents will be reported for prosecution.

Punctuality

Punctuality is also highly important. Pupils who arrive late to school are not only losing learning but also disrupting the learning of others as they arrive late for lessons. Pupils do not like being late into school and we witness how upsetting it can be for them. We want to prevent this.

The table below provides an example of the impact of lost learning through pupil lateness

Number of minutes late <i>per day over a school year</i>	Approximate equivalent number of days lost learning
5	3
10	6.5
15	10
20	13

If your child arrives late please escort your child to the school office to report a reason. This will be marked as late (L) on the school register. If this is after the register closes at 9.00am then this will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence. As a school, we will inform you at the earliest opportunity when your child's attendance or punctuality becomes a concern.

REMEMBER - Regular attendance is necessary for success in school. Help ensure that your child has the best opportunity for success by making sure he/she is in school every day.

Thank you for your support. I hope together we can make improvements to attendance and punctuality.

Best wishes

Mrs. L. Frazer

Headteacher

