



Unauthorised absences from school Hampshire County Council Update

Monday 9th November 2020

Dear Parents and Carers,

The government has stated that 'school attendance continues to be mandatory for all children' that are not clinically extremely vulnerable. We are therefore expecting that all children eligible to be in school, are in school please.

The update from Hampshire County Council, states that we **are not able to authorise absenteeism for children who are kept at home through parental choice.**

The only reasons you can keep your child off school are:

- **if they are genuinely ill, or have a medical/ hospital appointment.**
- **they are clinically extremely vulnerable and have received notification not to attend school from the GP**
- **have had a positive test for COVID-19 themselves**
- **if they are isolating due to a member of the household or close contact displaying symptoms of COVID**
- **a member of the household or close contact having had a positive test for COVID.**

Therefore if you choose to keep your child at home for any other reason, this will be recorded as an **unauthorised absence**. We have been advised to contact the Attendance Legal Panel for such cases.

We are not able to provide home learning or food parcels for children that have unauthorised absence.

We understand that this is a very anxious time for parents and carers, we have gone to great lengths to make sure that we follow the national guidelines recommend for operating school in the current climate. We have made sure that the risk assessments and protocols are of the highest standard and continue to take advice.

School is the best place for the children, they have already missed a great deal of learning time face to face. We have a recovery curriculum in place for all children, in both schools. However it is almost impossible to begin to narrow the gaps in learning if children are not in school.

We do not know how long coronavirus will be with us affecting our daily lives. What we do know, however, is that we only have the children in school for a very short time and we need to make the most of the few years that they are with us in our schools.

Unlike the first lockdown when schools were closed, this time schools remain open. The chief medical officers are saying now 'that the risk of not being in school outweigh the very small risk of children being in school, particularly given all the control measures, the hygiene, the cleaning that's taking place in our schools'.

There is a great deal of evidence, which highlights the need for children to have good attendance and engagement at school in order that they succeed in later life as independent individuals.

Please make contact with us if you would like to discuss this letter, we really want to work with you.

Cathy Ingram and Sarah Willes

Acting head teachers of Calmore Infant and Junior Schools