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Working together to improve punctuality and attendance

Dear Istead Rise Families,

We would like to welcome you to a new academic year and thank you for ensuring that your child/children have attended school regularly and on time during the initial few days of school. Along with parents and carers, the school has a duty to ensure that all pupils attend everyday and on time. This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. It has been shown that pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6) and Key Stage 4 (Year 11) have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

We recognise that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore as a school, we acknowledge that we need to work alongside parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. We also acknowledge that in some instances such as illness, absence is unavoidable.

The Government sets a minimum expectation of 95% attendance for every pupil, our school is aiming for at least 96%. Any pupil whose attendance falls below 95% will be monitored very carefully by us and further action may be taken if it does not improve. To help support attendance and the monitoring of absences, please follow the procedures below:

- If your child is absent from school we request that you call the school every day that they do not attend, no later than 9:00am.
- Short term illness of no more than 3 days is usually authorised if we are informed daily of the reason your child is unable to attend school.
- For any long term absences (more than 3 days) we will usually ask for medical evidence. If your child's level of attendance is very low, we may ask for medical evidence for every absence. Evidence can range from an appointment card from your surgery, a copy of a prescription or the empty medicine container with your child's name on it.
- Medical appointments should be made outside of school hours, but where this is unavoidable, please do your best to bring your child into school for their registration mark prior to an appointment (drop into the office with them), and then ensure they return to school as soon as possible afterwards. All appointments during school hours will need to be evidenced or will be processed as an unauthorised absence.

The above points, along with more detailed attendance and absence procedures, are included in our most recent Attendance and Punctuality Policy (which is in line with recent changes to Government and Local Authority legislation). Please take the time to familiarise yourself with it [here](#).

Please remember that your child should be in school by 8.50 am every day. Both gates are opened from 8:40 am and shut at 8:50am. Arriving after this time, sometimes causes embarrassment when a child has to enter their classroom late, at a time when the rest of their peers are settled and already working. If children arrive after registers close, this counts as an unauthorised absence.

In line with Government legislation and Trust policy, we do not authorise any requests for absence, including holidays. If there are exceptional circumstances these must be outlined in a letter to the Headteacher. If your child receives unauthorised absences, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice, in line with Government recommendations. The current fine is £60 per parent per child and rises to £120 per parent per child if not paid within 21 days.

To encourage and celebrate excellent attendance, from the start of Term 2 we are introducing some new and exciting attendance incentives:

Weekly:

- Each child who has 100% attendance for the week will receive an 'Attendance Credit' which they can spend in the school 'Attendance Shop'. Over the course of the term, children will accumulate credits. Every child should have at least one credit, with most having six to seven credits to spend. At the end of the term, children visit the shop and spend their credits.
- Each child with 100% attendance for the week will also receive a Marvellous Me attendance badge.
- Whole class attendance will be monitored. The class achieving the highest attendance per key stage will keep either HERO Teddy (KS1) or the attendance trophy (KS2) in their class for the week. The class will also gain two superclass letters.
- Attendance will be celebrated during weekly assemblies and displayed in the Key Stage 2 Hall.

Termly:

- The class (per key stage) with the best attendance over the term will choose a treat, for example an afternoon of extra PE/ off timetable activities or an own clothes day.

End of Academic Year:

- All children who have achieved at least 96% attendance for the whole school year will be put in a draw for a very special prize. They have the opportunity to win an individual/ family prize. This will be drawn in the last week of Term 6.
- The KS1 and KS2 classes with the highest attendance over the school year will win a class prize: a pizza party with additional special treats.

We are committed to working with families to support them in making sure every child's attendance is as good as it could be, given individual circumstances. We have many support services in place to help improve attendance. If you would like to speak in confidence about which services are available to you, please contact Mrs M Clark via the office.

We know that you will support and encourage your child to attend school each and every day and thank you in advance for this. We are looking forward to a positive and successful year ahead.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs M Clark
Deputy Headteacher