October 2018

Dear Parents

ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

One of the most important things your child can do to achieve academic success is also one of the most basic; going to school every day. Research has proven that good attendance has a positive effect on a child’s academic and social skills. Each school has to agree an attendance target which all children should aim for, and at St George’s, our whole school target is 97% for attendance and 100% for punctuality, allowing for the occasional sickness etc. Each term we send colour coded home letters for any child whose attendance is under 93%. For those children achieving between 90 – 93.0%, the colour will be orange and for those under 90%, a red warning letter will be sent as this means that the child has missed at least 16 days off school, which relates to three full school weeks. This has an adverse effect on your child’s progress. An Education Penalty Notice will be issued by the local authority where a child has attendance below 90% and at least 5% of absences are unauthorised.

START OF DAY AND LATENESS

At St George’s we have a soft start to the beginning of the school day so children can come into their classroom from 8.40 – 8.55am on three days a week. On the Wednesday and Friday the children are supervised in the playground from 8.40am. The register is taken at 8.55am and any child arriving to school after this time is marked late.

It is an important life skill to assist our children to arrive at school on time. If they are late, this means that they miss the beginning of the school day, instructions for the start of a lesson and assemblies. If they are marked as having unauthorised lates, this will go on their attendance record and any statistical records/data we have to submit to Harrow or the Department of Education will read as unauthorised lateness. If a child has more than 12 lates in 8 weeks, the parents can be issued with a Penalty Notice by the local authority. It is therefore important for parents to realise this, and to make every effort to reach school by 8.55am, as this is when the entrance gates close. At primary age, it is the responsibility of all parents to ensure their child arrives in time for school.

In case of any adverse weather (such as heavy snow) the school can agree to the registers being closed at a later time. Parents will continue to be informed by text messages if the school will be closed for any exceptional reason.

The school offers a breakfast club where parents can drop children off from 7.45am and be charged a small fee. Parents arriving before 8.40am and not wishing to use the Breakfast Club must stay and supervise their child until the school gates are opened. Any child found unsupervised before 8.30am will be asked to go to the Breakfast club and parents will be charged for this.
MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS

The school requires proof of a child’s medical or dental appointment. Please bring appointment cards to the school office on the morning of an appointment. If you do not have an appointment card, please pick up a form from the school office and ask the surgery or dental practice to stamp the form and bring back to the school, or show us a copy of prescription. If we do not receive official proof of a medical/dental appointment, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

The Governors do NOT authorise any holiday leave during term time as advised by the Department of Education. The School Term dates are sent over a year in advance so parents are well aware of when the half term and holiday breaks are. Headteachers can only authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances (such as severe illness or death in the family) and parents need to make an appointment and come in and discuss this. Each term, a few families have gone on holiday early without asking for permission from the school or filling in a leave of absence form. These have been marked on the attendance register as unauthorised and an Educational Penalty Notice can be issued as advised by the Local Authority. The charge is £60.00 per parent for each child. Any child who absent for two days or more, immediately before or after any half term must produce a medical certificate or note from the doctor to prove that they have been ill, or the absence will be treated as unauthorised holiday. Recently some families have been extending their holidays to make travel cheaper, however, this is not acceptable as school staff are here ready to teach the children.

ABSENCES

Parents should contact us on the first day of absence and leave a message on the answer phone, stating the date, child’s name/class and reason for not being at school. This should then be followed up with a letter on their return.

As a school, we would ask all parents to help us and their child to achieve the set attendance targets. If you have any concerns regarding your child’s attendance or lateness, please contact the office and make an appointment to see me.

I fully appreciate that this letter contains a huge amount of information. However it is our duty to clearly state the regulations surrounding attendance and punctuality. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the huge number of families who ensure their children arrive at school on time, dressed in full uniform and ready for learning with excellent attendance. Your support is invaluable to your child, and to us as a school.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

MRS D MONAGHAN
(Headteacher)