

# South Marston C of E Primary School

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**"Encourage one another and build each other up" 1 Thessalonians 5.11**

Head of School: Mrs M Hendry  
B.Ed. (Hons) QTS

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September

Dear Parents and Carers,

As many of you will be aware, the Government shared its attendance guidelines in August 2024. With that in mind, we'd like to remind families about the importance of regular school attendance and share some key information below.

## Your Responsibilities

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school every day and receives full time education (Education Act, 1996).

As a school, we work closely with the Trust and the Council's Educational Welfare Team to monitor attendance and ensure all children are accessing their education fully.

## Holidays and Unauthorised Absences

We are unable to authorise term time holidays, birthdays or similar events. Taking your child out of school for these reasons may result in a fixed penalty notice (a fine per child, per parent). If unauthorised absences continue, further legal action could be taken, which may lead to court proceedings. Please note - schools do not receive any money from these fines.

- *Your local council can give each parent a fine of £80, rising to £160 if you do not pay within 21 days.*
- *From the last academic school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period.*
- *If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school.*
- *If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.*

The Blue Kite Academy Trust

10 Ferndale Primary and Nursery School

Wiltshire Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1NX

**The Blue Kite**  
Academy Trust



## Monitoring Attendance

We regularly review attendance and punctuality. If a child's attendance drops below expected levels, we will send a reminder or update letter. Continued concerns may lead to contact from the Senior Leadership Team. In some cases, advice from the Educational Welfare Officer may be sought, and legal steps may follow if necessary.

## Absence Requests

In some special cases such as a family funeral, a one-day religious observance, or an official exam (e.g a dance exam) a short absence may be authorised. Parents must complete an Absence Request Form, available on our school website. Once submitted, you will receive a letter confirming whether the request has been authorised or not.

## Unexplained Absences

If your child is absent and we haven't heard from you, or **if we believe the reason for absence is not genuine, we may carry out a home visit** alongside the Educational Welfare Officer to ensure your child's safety and wellbeing. Parents must contact the school office to notify us of any absences. You will still need to contact the school office on subsequent days of absence.

## School Attendance Rates

At the end of the last academic year, our school's average attendance was 96%. We aim to improve this each year and appreciate your support in helping us do so.

Our attendance policy, which contains lots of information and details can be found on our school website.

If you have any questions or need support with your child's attendance, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Warm regards,

Mrs Hendry & Mr Conlan