



Lode Heath School

Lode Lane, Solihull,
B91 2HW
0121 704 1421

www.lodeheath.org.uk

ASSOCIATE HEADTEACHER:
MS L SUDDON

15 October 2018

Dear Parents and Carers

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

We would like to congratulate and thank the many parents and carers who make sure their children attend school regularly.

Lode Heath School is working in partnership with families and the Local Authority to improve school attendance.

Absence disrupts the education of the individual pupil and the whole class. Are you aware that children who do not attend regularly:

- find it difficult to catch up with learning they have missed
- find it difficult to maintain friendships
- do not achieve well in exams
- are more likely to become involved in crime
- miss out on opportunities in further education and the world of work?

We judge attendance on the following scale:

97-100%	No Risk
95-96.9%	Slight Risk
93-94.9%	Some Risk
90-92.9%	Serious Risk
Below 90%	Severe Risk

How does your child's attendance compare?

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher, within the boundaries set by the Education (Pupil Registrations) (England) Regulations 2006. **Headteachers may not authorise leave during term time except where the circumstances are exceptional.** Our school follows the DfE Guidance for attendance and absence.

Please remember that parental illness, going shopping, visiting family, birthdays, truancy, not wanting to go to school, alleged bullying (speak to school immediately to resolve the issue) are not acceptable reasons to be absent. All of these will be recorded as unauthorised absence, including if your child arrives at school after the close of registration.

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Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school with support from staff and peers can provide children with stability. The routine of school offers a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their children receive appropriate education. Failing to send your child to school regularly without good reason is a criminal offence.

Legal action that may be taken includes:

- **Issuing penalty notices:** Each parent receives a penalty notice for each child who has unauthorised absence. The penalty is £60 or £120 depending on how soon payment is made. So, if there are two parents and two children the total penalties could be up to £480. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.
- **Taking parents to court for unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444(1) – court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.
- **Taking parents to court for persistent unauthorised absence:** Education Act 1996 Section 444 (1A) – court can fine each parent up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Being taken to court could result in you having a criminal record.

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning and can seriously disadvantage your child in adult life.

If your child's level of absence is of serious concern, the school will offer advice and support to improve attendance. After this, any unauthorised absence may result in the School and the Local Authority taking legal action.

Again, we would like to thank those parents who make sure their child is attending school regularly and are therefore benefiting fully from their educational opportunity.

Yours faithfully

**Ms L Suddon
Associate Headteacher**

