



Dear Parents and Carers

16 September 2021

ATTENDANCE AT OCEAN ACADEMY – ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW **September 2021**

It is wonderful to be able to welcome families back to Ocean Academy, both returning pupils and new Year 3 pupils. At the start of this new school year, we would like to take the opportunity to reassure you that we have a robust plan in place, following all of the strict government guidance, to ensure that all pupils returning to school can do so safely with the control measures that we have in place. All of these details can be found on the letter sent out on 3 September 2021.

The Government has made it clear that children are required to return to school this September 2021, for the start of the new academic year - **It is a legal obligation for parents to ensure that their children attend school.** The Government's advice is that the risk to children themselves becoming severely ill from coronavirus is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. We are very much looking forward to having all children back in school and being able to share exciting learning opportunities together again across each year group 'bubble'.

Absence

Please be aware that there are some circumstances where pupils will be unable to attend school due to the coronavirus or other illnesses. Incidents of sickness or diarrhoea require children to remain at home for 48 hours after the last episode. The Government has provided clear guidance on when a pupil should stay away from school due to coronavirus. A summary of this guidance can be found on the grid attached to this letter and please follow this in the first instance. Should you have concerns that cannot be answered from the information provided, please make contact with the school office.

What to do if your child is ill

If your child cannot attend school, parents are required to contact the school on 01202 606888 and speak to Mrs Burry or Mrs Fudge. If they are busy, please leave a message.

- You are required to call **every day** of your child's absence.
- If we do not receive a reason for your child's absence, then we will try and contact you and find out why your child is not in school.
- Should we be unable to contact you we may ask the School Attendance Worker to carry out a visit or academy staff may visit your home as a matter of safeguarding.

Medical appointments

Wherever possible, we would ask that medical appointments be made outside of the school day, although we understand that this is not always possible. If your child does need to attend a medical

appointment or dentist, you will be **asked to provide evidence** of this appointment. This needs to show your child's name, date and be signed by a medical professional.

Regular Attendance

At Ocean Academy regular school attendance is recognised as key to achievement as children achieve better if they attend school regularly. **The link between regular attendance and attainment in school (and in later life) is well researched.** We encourage regular attendance and our target is **95%**. It is surprising how quickly a few absences and late arrivals can add up to lost learning time. For example, a child with **95%** attendance has **missed half a day a fortnight** and for **90%** attendance, **half a day missed every week**.

For this reason, children's attendance is monitored closely by Mrs Richardson and reviewed on a regular basis alongside BCP council. Parents will be contacted to discuss absences and to offer support if absence begins to fall below these expectations. We work closely with the Local Authority, taking advice from them if we have concerns about an individual's attendance. Please be aware that when attendance drops below **90%**, the child is considered to be **'persistently absent'**.

Punctuality

Good punctuality is also key. If your child arrives after the start of the day (9am) they will be registered as 'late'. Lateness beyond 9.15am will be counted as an absence for the morning session. If your child is persistently late we will contact you to discuss this. Children are very unsettled when walking into class late and the learning has already started.

Requests for absence during term time

Following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration, England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect 1st September 2013, Headteachers and Principals are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In considering whether or not to authorise a request for exceptional leave of absence in term time, Headteachers and Principals will look at each individual case and only grant authorisation if the circumstances are truly exceptional.

Any request for absence should be made **prior** to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school using the 'Request for Leave of Absence form' (available from the School Office or from the school website).

Parents/Carers will be asked to provide additional information/evidence or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances of the absence.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. 'Unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another



time. As a general guide, the following indicates the type of scenarios that might be considered as 'exceptional':

- Immediate family member returning home from Service Duty
- Immediate family weddings or funerals (if abroad, only the actual day of the wedding or funeral)
- Occasions of religious observance
- Other situations where a 'compassionate' element is applicable

Generally, the following scenarios cannot be considered 'exceptional':

- Annual family holidays
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time
- Family birthdays or other events
- Parents' profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays

Following an application for term time absence, parents/carers will be notified of the Headteacher's or Principal's decision at the earliest opportunity. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional then the absence cannot be authorised and the school may need to request that the Local Authority issues a Fixed Penalty Notice. In considering whether to request a Penalty Notice, the school will have due regard to the latest version of the BCP Council 'Education Penalty Notice - Code of Conduct' (currently April 2019). Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school office or Mrs Richardson.

Regards

Mrs J Quarrie
Executive Principal

School Matters!



Attendance Team

Mrs Richardson	Attendance Lead
Mrs J Burry	Attendance –school office
Mrs A C-Simpson	Pastoral Lead
Mr Tharme	Associate Principal
Mrs Quarrie	Executive Principal



Coronavirus related absences – Quick reference Guide

What to do if....	Action needed	Return to school when...
My child has coronavirus symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO NOT come to school Contact the school office daily via telephone (01202 606888) or email office@ocean-aspirations.org Self-isolate Have a PCR test Inform the school immediately about the test result 	The child's PCR test comes back as negative and your child no longer has the symptoms of the coronavirus
My child tests positive for coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO NOT come to school Contact the school office via telephone (01202 606888) or email office@ocean-aspirations.org Self-isolate for at least 10 days from the start of the symptoms Inform the school immediately about the test result 	Your child has been in self-isolation for at least 10 days and they feel better. They can return to school after 10 days even if they still have a cough or loss of smell/taste. These symptoms can last for several weeks after the infection has gone
Someone in my household has coronavirus symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The household member with coronavirus symptoms it is recommended they take a PCR test. Children can come to school. 	Your child's PCR test comes back as negative and they do not have any symptoms of the coronavirus.
Someone in my household has tested positive for coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The household member must isolate for 10 days 	Your child's PCR test comes back as negative and they do



	<p>and not enter the school grounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that each child takes a LFT or PCR test if they have symptoms. 	not have any symptoms of the coronavirus.
NHS test and trace have identified my child as a 'close contact' of someone with symptoms or confirmed coronavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your child may be advised to have a PCR test 	Your child's PCR test comes back as negative and they do not have any symptoms of the coronavirus.
My child and family have travelled abroad to a country which requires us to self-isolate on our return	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DO NOT come to school Contact the school office daily via telephone (01202 606888) or email office@ocean-aspirations.org Self-isolate for 14 days 	Your child/family have completed 14 days of quarantine (self-isolating at home)

