



14 January 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

## **ATTENDANCE AT OCEAN ACADEMY – ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW** **January 2020**

At the start of this new school term, we would like to take the opportunity to remind our parents and carers of the importance of regular school attendance.

At Ocean Academy regular school attendance is recognised as key to achievement - 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 and reviewed on a regular basis alongside BCP council, and parents will be contacted if there is cause for concern. We work closely with the Local Authority School Attendance Service, 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'.

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.

### **Absence**

If your child cannot attend school, parents are required to contact the school on 01202 606888 and speak to Mrs Fudge or Mrs Burry. 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.

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. It needs to show the child's name, date and be signed.

### **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. Additionally, any request 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 may 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).

Regards



Mrs J Quarrie  
Principal

### School Matters!



#### Attendance Team

Mrs J Lundon	School Attendance Worker
Mrs Richardson	Attendance Lead
Mrs J Burry	Attendance –school office
Mrs A C-Simpson	Pastoral Lead
Mrs Quarrie	Principal

