

THORNDOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Carers

At the request of the Parent Forum, I am writing to explain the letter procedure we follow to inform you about absence, as well as the guidance concerning penalty notices issued by the Cambridgeshire County when you take an unauthorised holiday in term time.

The Letter Procedure

The three-letter procedure is intended to enable us to continuously and consistently monitor and address poor school attendance. This is based on three letters which we can send to parents when there are concerns about any emerging patterns of absenteeism. Each stage of the process is carried out in consultation with the Local Educational Welfare Officer, Melanie Algate.

Letter One

We are expected to write to you half-termly to inform you if your child's attendance drops below 95%. The Local Authority feel that this first letter is a means by which parents can be informed to directly influence their child attendance in a positive way. This letter has been proven to make rapid improvements in children's attendance all over Cambridgeshire. Schools can readily identify emerging attendance problems and therefore target support accordingly. We try to work with families from the start of the process to find a way of helping them improve their child's attendance as quickly as possible. If you would like some help please contact your child's class teacher.

We are aware that the wording on this letter could be improved, and Mrs Cook and I are exploring ways of ensuring the Local Authority's message is still given to you but maybe not using such official language!

Letter Two

This letter is sent out when a pupil's attendance remains low or if attendance has improved but not sustained. This letter will only be sent out when the local Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and the school feel that there is no sign of any improvement in the child's attendance. Often at this stage, proof of illness is required, such as a copy of any prescription prescribed to the pupil involved.

Letter Three

Should the pupil's attendance still fail to improve, or should it fall to a lower level, then a copy of Letter 3 is sent to the parents with agreement by the Education Welfare Officer. Sending this letter is very, very rare.

Should the attendance drop again, then a formal meeting with parents is called with the EWO and the school. This may result in court action.

Penalty Notices

I have attached the Local Authority's guidelines regarding taking unauthorised holidays during term time and how penalty notices are issued by them.

If you would like to discuss the Local Authority's guidance or any personal attendance matter, please do not hesitate in making an appointment through the school office.

Yours sincerely,

Vicci Godbold
Headteacher

HAPPY, HEALTHY, HIGH ACHIEVERS