



Flyford Flavell Primary School

Radford Road,
Flyford Flavell,
Worcestershire,
WR7 4BS

HEADTEACHER: Mrs Rosalind Bennett

CHAIR OF GOVERNORS: Mrs Anne Howarth

9th April 2024

Dear Parents/Carers

RE: Attendance

I would like to say an enormous thank you to all the parents who support us in achieving good levels of attendance. Our team really appreciate it when school is prioritised over family holidays, visits and occasions. This sends a good message to our children about the importance of education, and it supports our teachers and learning assistants in their work. Unfortunately, we have a rising number of requests for absences so I felt it important to share the impact of unauthorised absences with our community, in the hope that we can get all families to support us with this important issue.

At the end of term, classes from Year 1 – 6 undertake assessments in reading, writing and maths to help define children's progress. When children are not in school to undertake these assessments, we need to find time upon their return to do so. This involves pulling our Learning Assistants away from supporting other children in class to make sure that every child has undertaken their appropriate assessment. Two of our teachers missed their planning and preparation afternoons recently to administer assessments to children who were going to be absent on the timetabled day.

When children return from an absence, we need to get them up to speed with their learning. Our English work is always based on a text, so a support is drawn away from children who need it most whilst the class text is revisited. Learning is hierarchical, for example, if introducing a mathematical concept then we can not introduce lesson 5 on fractions without going over the previous learning. We have to repeat this across our curriculum. This takes our support staff away from their usual duties including supporting children that they would usually work with in class.

This year we have had to comfort children who have been upset that they couldn't take part in a sporting event or have a part in our Christmas production due to a forthcoming holiday. We have had children who lack confidence in specific subject areas withdrawn from school thus missing learning, planned interventions and the maths specialist support that we purchase.

We also have unusual patterns of absence, where children are encouraged by their parents to be dishonest about why they are not in school. This puts both teachers and children in a difficult position and does not build up the positive and trusting relationships that we aim for.

I would like parents to be aware that when choosing to withdraw a child from school, it does not just affect your own child. It impacts on the learning of others— in particular children who need additional support. It also impacts on the workload of our staff, in a role that is already at capacity. I hope that this greater awareness will ensure that all parents support us in the future, so that we can do the best for all learners.

Many apologies that this could be perceived as a "grumbly" letter, however you have chosen a school for your child that cares deeply about the children in its care. It's disheartening for all of our team, when we see children being

short changed, staff workload increased, or children being encouraged to be dishonest due to family holidays, visits or occasions.

I would once again ask that all parents support us by only keeping children away from school when they are genuinely ill. Your help with this would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

R J Bennett

Headteacher