



Bapchild & Tonge CE (Aided) Primary School and Nursery

Headteacher: Mr C Kelly

School Lane
Bapchild
Kent ME9 9NL

email: office@bapchild.kent.sch.uk

Tel: 01795 424143

Thursday 23rd January 2025

Dear Parents/Carers

Re: Driving-up School Attendance and Punctuality

At Bapchild and Tonge we want all our children to enjoy school and achieve their potential. We are committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality and we really appreciate your support in ensuring that children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Many of our children achieve really great attendance and we reward and recognise this with 100% termly postcard, certificates and stickers. We also make you as parents know about you child's attendance and help you to stay informed.

To keep attendance at the forefront of your minds, I am writing to provide a reminder of attendance procedures at Bapchild and Tonge, as well as keep you updated on national changes that the Department for Education (DfE) have implemented. From 19th August 2024 the DfE issued new statutory guidance called *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*. It details what schools, parents and Local Authorities should do to improve pupils' attendance at school. These details are explained in our School Attendance Policy which can be found on the school's website.

A reminder of day-to-day processes

If your child/children are absent from school, please contact us on **each day** of the absence and provide the reason. It is the Headteacher's decision as to whether this absence is authorised or not. In most cases, absence is genuine and marked as authorised on the register. Please let the school know by 8.30am on each and every day they are unwell.

You can do this from the following ways:

1. By emailing office@bapchild.kent.sch.uk with your child's full name, class, and reason for absence.
2. By phoning the absence line on 01795 424143 (Option 1) and leaving a message. Please state your child's full name, their class, and the reason for the absence.
3. If your child has a medical or dental appointment, please let us know in advance by either of the above methods or by sending a note in advance. We ask for any appointment cards, letters or slips to be handed in to show as evidence of the appointment. If your child is absent for an extended period of time, or is poorly regularly, then the school will ask for a doctor's note.

Attendance concerns

As part of our attendance policy, the school is keen to work with families to ensure that we see improvements in school attendance. Your child's class teacher or a member of the pastoral team will contact families when attendance becomes a concern.

Parents are responsible by law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered. The attendance needs to be regular, punctual, with students ready to learn. Children with attendance under 90% are

classified by the DfE as 'Persistent Absentees'. In this instance, Bapchild and Tonge are legally obliged to provide support and intervention for pupils who are at risk of persistent absence. This could take the form of meetings with parents, school-based interventions, and the offer of support from outside agencies and professionals.

Changes to Penalty Notices

Term Time Leave Requests for absence should be made by parents in line with our Attendance Policy. Parents should complete the application for leave form found on the website or get a hard copy from the office <https://bapchild-and-tonge-c-of-e-primary-school.secure-primariesite.net/attendance/>

As is currently the case, I may still only authorise absence that is considered to be an unavoidable and exceptional circumstance. If a pupil takes unauthorised term time leave for 10 consecutive sessions or more (generally 5 days) they will be subject to a penalty notice.

- The fine for a penalty notice is increasing - to £80 per parent, per child. This increases to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days for pupils who are of statutory school age. If a penalty notice remains unpaid, parents may be the subject of court proceedings for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of their child and this could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months per parent.
- For second offences of unauthorised term time leave (10 consecutive sessions or more) within a three-year rolling period, the fine is a flat £160 per parent, per child.
- For the third offence in a three-year rolling period, the referral will be automatically considered for prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996.

These fines will apply to term time leave taken after 19th August 2024. Previous penalty notices from the last 3 years will be taken into account when a period of term time leave is taken after the 19th August 2024. Therefore, if parents have already received one penalty notice in the last three years, they will get a fine of £160 per parent per child for their next one. If they have received two or more in the last three years, they should expect to be referred for prosecution.

Please refer to the helpful guide on the website to aid understand of the Penalty Notice Fines system <https://bapchild-and-tonge-c-of-e-primary-school.secure-primariesite.net/attendance/>

As with everything we do our primary goal is to ensure that children do not miss out on their education and that they achieve their true potential. Every lesson is a crucial part of your child's learning journey, and frequent absences can significantly hinder their progress.

Thank you for your continued support in the school and your child's education.

Yours sincerely,

C Kelly

Mr C Kelly
Headteacher