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Date: 22/06/12



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Letter to all Parents and Carers of pupils in Cardiff's Schools

Dear Parent/Carer,

In Cardiff we have high ambitions for all pupils and want them to achieve success and realise their full potential. Excellent attendance and punctuality are crucial to achieving this. Recently, there has been a great deal written in the local press about Cardiff's school attendance being amongst the lowest in Wales.

All pupils should achieve attendance of at least 95%; this is the target set by both Cardiff Education Service and the Welsh Government. If your child's attendance falls below this, potentially their chances of being successful at school are being put at risk. We recognise that some children will be unable to achieve this rate due to illness or because of exceptional circumstances (which would need to be discussed with the headteacher). Other than in these special cases, your child should be attending school 95%, or more of the time.

There is a strong link between attendance rates and examination success. Research shows that missing 17 days of school a year (an attendance rate of 91%) can result in a drop of a GCSE grade across all subjects. In the workplace unauthorised absence would not be accepted and we need to help our children and young people to prepare for the workplace.

Given the need to ensure high attendance, we have reviewed the impact of holidays taken in term-time. We are now asking headteachers not to authorise requests for a holiday in term-time. There is no right that enables parents and carers to take a child out of school for a term-time holiday. To put this in context, schools are open to pupils on 190 days of the year which leaves 175 days for holidays and visiting family.

The policy that Cardiff Council used to have on Extended Holidays has now been withdrawn. Families are requested to make arrangements to take these in the 6 week break in July and August in order to help schools to support your child in achieving success.

Regular attendance is important, not just because the law requires it, but also because it is the best way of ensuring children get the most out of school. You need to make sure that your child attends every day and is on time. If your child is absent for any reason, please contact the school to explain the absence.

Every school has access to a School Attendance Officer and an allocated Education Welfare Officer who will help and support you with any difficulties you may have with your child's attendance at school. Please contact your child's school in the first instance. Alternatively, contact the Education Welfare Service Office on 029 2062 9800 or e-mail ewsreferrals@cardiff.gov.uk

In partnership with parents and carers, we can all make a difference to the life chances of children and young people by maintaining excellent attendance rates.

Finally, I would like to pass on the Council's congratulations to the 1,229 pupils who did not miss a single day of school last year and the 47% of pupils from all of our schools who achieved between 95 -100% attendance.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan House
Chief Executive