

30th September 2020

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – COVID UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2020

A very important message for all parent/carers

Dear Parent/Carer,

This is a message about school attendance.

As part of the drb Ignite Trust, The Oval School is working in partnership with parents and the local authority to welcome and encourage all children back into school. We recognise that this has been a very difficult few months for us all and we would like to thank you for the great work you have done in ensuring your child has continued to learn at home over this period.

Way back in March 2020, the government announced that no parent would be penalised or sanctioned for their child's non-attendance at school because of the Covid-19 pandemic. All schools were then closed to all but specific groups of pupils; those of essential workers and vulnerable children.

Now, the circumstances have changed and government are requiring all children to attend school. It is vital for children to return to minimise, as far as possible, the longer term impact of the pandemic on their education, wellbeing and all-round development. We know that children have greatly missed the routine of school life and being with their friends and teachers.

Missing out on more time in school risks them falling further behind. We already know that those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well and we want to avoid this.

School attendance is therefore compulsory again from the beginning of this Autumn Term 2020.

This means that from now onwards (unless parents are formally notified by the school of a local lockdown requiring the school to be closed), the usual rules on school attendance will apply. These are:

- parents have a duty to send their child to school regularly where they are of compulsory school age
- schools have a responsibility to record attendance and follow up any absence

- local authorities have availability to use legal sanctions, including penalty notices and prosecution in court if a child is persistently absent

If you are worried about your child attending school, please speak to your child's teacher /headteacher straight away. We are all here to help in every way we can and want the best for your child. We also have access to local health and support teams who will be able to offer further advice and support if needed.

Additionally, please note that this is not the time to take your child out of school for a family holiday or other term time leave. It is unlikely that any such leave will be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. The more children are in school, the more we will be able to help them to catch up on lost learning and get back on track.

Family emergencies should be given careful consideration. It may not always be appropriate or in your child's best interests to miss school for emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Again, please contact school immediately in such situations and we will do our very best to support you.

All schools in the drb Ignite Trust are working closely with Trust leaders, trustees and the local authority. We are clear that we do not want to take legal action against parents for non-attendance issues. We will make every attempt to resolve parental concerns and work with you to improve attendance before any formal action is considered.

After so much disruption to school life and education for your child, the most important thing is that we continue to work together to get children back into school and enjoying their learning. Please do not hesitate to contact school if you have any concerns or worries.

We wish you and your child all the best for the coming academic year.

Kind regards,



Robert Bowater
Trust CEO



Mrs D Williams
Headteacher