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Dear parent/carers

### **Miss School, Miss Out!**

Did you know that last year, one in five children in Portsmouth each missed a total of one week of school through unauthorised absence? That means they not only missed out on lessons but also school clubs, friendships and school trips, leaving gaps in their learning which could limit their future options in life.

If children understand the importance of regular attendance from an early age, it helps them to maintain that attitude throughout their school life and into their work life.

### **What is authorised and unauthorised absence?**

Any term-time absence must be approved by the school's head teacher. This is called authorised absence.

At the head teacher's discretion, absence may be authorised for genuine illness or for reasons of religious belief. Check the school website to be sure you understand our policy on authorised absence.

Any absence not approved by the head teacher is an unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence includes time off for shopping, birthdays, holidays, visiting relatives, getting up late and days out.

### **School attendance - penalty notices**

It's a legal requirement that children have access to education. If a child misses 10 half-day sessions, the equivalent of a full week's school, through unauthorised absence in one term, parents can be issued with a penalty notice. Penalty notices are issued per parent per child and are £60 payable within 21 days and £120 payable within the 22nd and 28th day.

You can find out more about school attendance at [www.portsmouth.gov.uk/attendance](http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/attendance) and by joining the conversation on Facebook and Twitter using #MissSchoolMissOut.

## Top tips that could help to prevent absence

- Talk to your child about how important it is to attend school
- Inspire them to think about what they would like to be when they grow up and how school can help with that
- Ask regularly about how school is going
- If you're unsure if your child is too ill for school, use the guidance on illness on the NHS Healthier Together website -
  - [www.what0-18.nhs.uk](http://www.what0-18.nhs.uk)
  - Look in the Parents/Carers section for the 'Child Unwell? OK to go to school?' article
- Book all holidays outside of term time
- Book medical and dental appointments outside school hours if possible - and if not possible, ensure your child attends school before and after the appointment
- If you are concerned about your child's learning or any other aspect of school, please speak to your child's class teacher, form tutor or head of year
- Provide a good environment for study at home and ensure they have time set aside for homework
- Find out if your child wants to avoid school for a reason that they're frightened to tell you about - perhaps they're being bullied. The NHS Healthier Together website has helpful information in the Parents/Carers section called 'Concerned about your child's behaviour or emotions?'
- If you're having trouble getting your children to school, please talk to the staff at the school, who can help you to make sure they don't miss out.