

Angmering Locality of Schools



Dear Parents & Carers,

As you may be aware, school attendance is a high priority for government, particularly since the pandemic, and school headteachers are responsible for ensuring good levels of attendance for all pupils. In particular, new changes to the attendance guidance will come into force over the summer which will affect how schools manage absence.

In the Angmering locality we have always worked closely together to ensure that our approaches are the same, and treat all families equally. For that reason, we are jointly sharing this update on changes to attendance policy from September 2024, so that parents are aware of some key changes that the government has set out.

Key Changes to be aware of

- Schools will not be able to authorise absence for a holiday or any purpose of leisure and recreation;
- Schools will not be able to take parents' employment circumstances or working patterns into account when considering absence requests;
- Being late to school after the register has closed will count as an unauthorised absence and will count towards a potential fine;
- Penalty Notice fines administered by West Sussex County Council for non-attendance will be up to £160 per pupil, per parent;
- If a family is eligible for a fine for a third time within 3 years, then instead of a fine, parents would face a court prosecution
- As previously, fines are issued by West Sussex County Council in cases where children miss 10 school sessions (equal to 5 school days) over a 10-week period. In the case of weeks where the school is closed for an Inset Day, a fine may still be issued for missing the other 4 days in that week.

Headteachers will still be able to approve absence in **exceptional circumstances**. To be approved, absence should meet the 4 criteria of being rare, short, significant and unavoidable. For example, absence for a religious observance or a school transition visit would be approved, but attendance at a family birthday party or a family day trip would not meet the criteria.

Families who wish to request absence from school should complete the absence request form and submit it to the school for consideration. Only the headteacher can approve an absence.

We recognise that there are other circumstances where attendance can be challenging, and schools will continue to work with families to provide support where that is needed. Please do always contact us in these cases, and we will be happy to help.

Headteachers
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