



**Merley First School**  
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[www.merleyfirstschool.org](http://www.merleyfirstschool.org)  
**Headteacher:** Rebecca Baldwin

1st October 2025

Dear Parents and Carers

### **Information for parents and carers on the importance of attendance and the attendance process.**

Merley First School is committed to ensuring our pupils achieve the best possible outcomes, both academically and socially and good school attendance is key to achieving this aim. Here at Merley First School we are determined to ensure that all of our pupils have the opportunity to achieve success and have an excellent record of attendance. We will work hard to provide a safe and welcoming environment for your child and will monitor attendance closely.

We know that good school attendance improves your child's chances of success in life. There is clear evidence of the link between good attendance at school and high levels of achievement. Children with no absence at key stage 4 are almost 2 times more likely to achieve 5 or more GCSEs than children who missed 10-15 percent of lessons.

If your child has an attendance level of 90%, they will have missed one day a fortnight in school. Over a school year this will represent four weeks of absence. If this level of absence were maintained for a five-year period it would mean half a school year would have been missed. We would really appreciate your help in ensuring that your child has a high level of school attendance.

If there is a concern, please let us know straight away. If we have concerns, we will contact you so that we can work together to identify any barriers that may be preventing your child from attending school and ensure support is put in place, including other agency support if this is appropriate.

We do not routinely authorise holidays in school time. Please be aware that the threshold for issuing a penalty notice (fine) for attendance has changed. The fine for school absences across the country is now **£80 if paid within 21 days**, or **£160 if paid within 28 days** and may be issued to each parent who has responsibility for attendance and for each individual child. If a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. A parent can only have two fines within any three-year period; once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Under the national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) within ten weeks for unauthorised reasons:

- code G (the pupil is unauthorised absent for the purpose of a holiday)
- code N (the circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established)
- code O (Unauthorised absence)





- code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended (late) but before the end of the session, where no other code applies).

More information on the national threshold for penalty notices can be found [here](#).

Our attendance policy, which is updated annually to reflect government guidance, is available on the school website. Please click [here](#).

We would ask that, where your child is going to be absent, you contact the school on 01202 888455 or via Arbor no later than 8.45am on the day of absence.

We look forward to working in partnership with you this year.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Baldwin  
Headteacher