



# Lavant

## C.E. Primary School

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Every child has a right to education and parents are legally responsible for making sure that their child, once enrolled at a school, attends regularly and punctually. At Lavant CE Primary School, we have always had high expectations for attendance and punctuality, and communicate these expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents. This is because regular attendance at school is the single most important factor in a child flourishing and achieving success. As well as improving academic attainment, children also learn many other important lessons in school, such as how to build relationships with other children and how to behave positively in group settings to name but a few. It also sets up good habits for the future, when young people enter into other educational establishments and into the workplace.

Please support us in school by only keeping your child away from school if they are poorly. Please see the NHS site 'Is my child too ill for school?' <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/> if you are in any doubt as to whether your child is well enough for school.

Unfortunately, we have recently seen an increase in the number of parents taking their children out of school during the school term which significantly disrupts and impacts learning. Whilst we appreciate your honesty in informing us of the reason for any planned absence, we ask all parents to think very carefully before deciding to book family holidays.

Driving up attendance and tackling persistent absence is at the centre of new stronger measures launched by the Department for Education and, as such, any unauthorised absence is being treated very seriously. As headteacher, I am unable to authorise any holidays during term time and am now required to send parents the following letter if children are being taken out of school for such events.

***School Attendance: Education Act 1996, Section 23 Anti Social Behaviour Act and Section 16 Crime & Disorder Act.***

*Your request to take a family holiday during term time has been denied. I am sure you will appreciate how extended absence from school during term time can seriously disrupt your child's progress. I am reminding you that if you do remove your child during this period, it could potentially be a criminal offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996. On conviction, the penalty can be a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 6 months imprisonment.*

*If your child accrues 10 or more unauthorised absences (5 or more days) then a referral will be made to West Sussex County Council to consider what further action is appropriate. If the Council are satisfied that an offence has been committed, then you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice ("FPN") (which could be issued per child, per parent, or alternatively you may not be offered a FPN and instead prosecuted in the Magistrates court. Whether you are offered a fine or prosecuted is at the discretion of the County Council.*

*If the Council offer you a Fixed Penalty Notice, it is £120 and should be paid within 28 days. If payment is within 21 days the charge is £60. If the fine is unpaid within that period, then you may be prosecuted for the offence contrary to s444 of the Education Act 1996.*

*I remind you that there are only 190 days in the school year which means that there are 175 non-school days left for holidays, treats and shopping. It is in everybody's interest to avoid the consequences of a child's unlawful extended absence from school and so I hope that this letter gives you the opportunity to think carefully about your decision to take your child/ren out of school during term time."*

You may be shocked by the strong wording in this letter, but it clearly expresses the importance being placed on pupil attendance by all involved in the education of children and young people.

If you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance, or would like any support with any matters concerning attendance and punctuality please do not hesitate to speak to me.

With huge thanks for your support with this important matter,



Mr Adrian King,  
Head Teacher