



Library Road, Parkstone, Poole, BH12 2BG

Telephone: (01202) 743918

[www.heatherlands.poole.sch.uk](http://www.heatherlands.poole.sch.uk)

**Headteacher: Mr J Churchill BA (Hons), M.A, PGCE, NPQH**

**Deputy Head: Mrs K Lloyd-Christie BA (Hons), QTS, NPQH**

'At Heatherlands we believe every child deserves the best start in life'

**10<sup>th</sup> December 2025**

Dear Parents/Carers

During the school year we are required to undertake regular half termly attendance audits, when we review all the children's marks and percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences. Currently as a school our attendance is sitting at national level, but we are in danger of slipping below the national average.

Therefore we would like to remind our families about the importance of regular school attendance. The Department for Education requires schools to do all they can to support every child to attend school regularly and to follow up any concerns quickly.

Regular attendance in school goes hand in hand with academic progress. Please ensure your child is only kept home when necessary. If a child is poorly, we of course want them to be afforded the time at home to recover, but children should be encouraged to persevere through minor ailments.

The NHS have compiled advice and guidance for parents within the following link:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

The full attendance policy is on the school's website, but here are some of the most key points of the policy.

### **Lateness**

Lateness is also monitored within our attendance audits and has been raised as a significant concern. Every time a child is late after 9am they receive a late mark, and after 9.30am they are awarded an unauthorised late mark, which impacts their overall attendance figures. If unauthorised attendance rises above 10% it could result in the school requesting that the Local Authority issues a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Fines are requested in line with the current guidance from the Local Authority and are usually issued on a 'per parent, per child' basis.

**Punctuality is important: lateness disrupts learning.**

### **Persistent Absence**

A pupil is classed as a *Persistent Absentee* when their attendance falls below 90%, regardless of the reasons for absence. This level of absence has a significant impact on a child's learning, progress, and wellbeing, as they miss vital teaching and opportunities to build confidence and secure key skills. Schools are required to monitor persistent absence closely and work with parents and the local authority to improve attendance. If a child becomes, or is at risk of



**National Support School**  
designated by



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Teaching & Leadership**



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becoming, a Persistent Absentee, the school will contact parents to discuss support and may be required to involve external agencies where necessary to ensure the child's regular attendance.

### Leave of Absence

As a school, we fully understand the importance to spending quality time with your family which can often be achieved by going on holiday. We are also aware that during term time these holidays are significantly cheaper which remains a problem for families of children. We all agree this price hike needs addressing centrally.

However, as it currently stands, we are unable to authorise holidays during term time unless in exceptional circumstances.

As a general guide, the following might be considered as 'exceptional':

- Immediate family weddings, christenings or funerals;
- Immediate family member returning home from Service Duty;
- Occasions of religious observance;
- Other situations where a 'compassionate' element is applicable.

Generally, the following **cannot** be considered 'exceptional':

- Family holidays and breaks
- Parent's profession or place of work making it difficult to align school and work holidays
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time
- Family birthdays or other events
- Birthdays

We receive regular holiday requests during term time and whilst we empathise, we are legally bound to class these holidays as unauthorised leave, regardless of how enriching or exciting these trips may be.

The school's ability to authorise holiday requests is **governed by law** and so we would ask that give it your full consideration before making a holiday request during term time.

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This table shows how being away from school can quickly build up to lost learning time:

Attendance level	Number of school days lost	Impact on pupil
96% or above	Less than 10 days absence a year	These pupils benefit from strong overall attendance and are well placed to make good progress at school.
90%	19 days absence a year	Pupils in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.
85%	29 days absence a year	Pupils in this group are missing six weeks of school per year and their progress will be significantly hindered. Absence below 90% is seen as persistent absenteeism.
80%	38 days absence a year	Attendance at this level is the same as missing a full year of school every five years.

The following table shows how quickly lateness can cause lost learning time:

Minutes late per day	= days of learning lost per year
5	3.2
10	6.5
15	9.5
20	12.5
30	19

Children make their best progress when they are in school consistently. It's surprising how quickly occasional absences accumulate — 96% attendance means almost 10 days of missed learning. By supporting one another, we can give children the strongest foundations for their future.

Yours faithfully



Mrs K Lloyd-Christie  
Deputy Head Teacher