



Dear Parents/Carer,

The vast majority of you ensure that your children attend school daily and on time. Thank you for your efforts with this. It is factually recognised that children who have strong school attendance go on to have higher levels of achievement and more positive life outcomes. Our school had 95% attendance last year which was marginally higher than figures nationally. This is due to your efforts in working with us.

Legal guidance for schools has changed in relation to the publication of “Working together to improve school attendance 2024” which is aimed at ensuring all children receive a consistent and uninterrupted education. There is a lot more monitoring of schools in terms of ensuring that they are safeguarding children through their attendance procedures but are also doing all they can to ensure children receive their educational entitlement.

### **Statutory Expectations**

The Department for Education has implemented updated legal guidance concerning school attendance, which sets out compulsory expectations. The key points of this legislation are as follows:

1. **Attendance:** All children are required to attend school regularly. Absences will only be excused for valid reasons such as illness, medical appointments, or pre-approved exceptional circumstances. If your child’s attendance falls below 90% absences can only be authorised with medical evidence.
2. **Punctuality:** It is a parent/carer's responsibility to ensure a child attends school on time, poor punctuality will affect the child's school attendance and quality of education
3. **Attendance monitoring:** The school will closely monitor attendance records. Parents will be contacted regarding any concerning patterns of absences, and meetings may be scheduled to discuss solutions to improve attendance
4. **Unauthorised term time leave:** Parents/carers have no legal right to remove a child from education. The local authority may issue a Penalty Notice of up to £160 per child, per parent/carer for unauthorised term time leave. A third offence in 3 years may lead to prosecution and can result in criminal record and fines of up to £2,500. To comply with the safeguarding process parents/carers must complete a term time absence form available from the school office/school website. This should be completed 2 weeks in advance of any leave.

**As a school, we cannot authorise holidays. It is important that parents understand that, as stated above, parents and carers have no legal right to remove a child from education and to do so may incur a fine.**

To support us in our efforts to continue to ensure that our children are attending school at the specified level of 95%+, we are now working with our safeguarding partners, Clennell to enable us to carry out home visits for absent children. Our attendance worker is Grant Short. He may visit if we have been given no reason for absence, if we have been given a reason but your child’s attention is below 95%, or if the reason given is not authorised. The purpose of the visit is to check that families are safe and do not need any assistance. He will also talk through any concerns about attendance. Grant then works with school to consider if there is any further support necessary.

### **Support and resources**

We understand that there may be circumstances that make regular attendance difficult. Our school is committed to supporting families in any way possible. Please contact Miss Barnfather at [Parents@shiremoor-primary.co.uk](mailto:Parents@shiremoor-primary.co.uk) for assistance or to discuss any concerns regarding your child’s attendance.

Our collective effort will ensure that all children have the opportunity to succeed in their education. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to your child's learning.