

GALLEY HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

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Dear Parents and Carers,

As we welcome the children back at the start of the new school year, we have been asked by the Department for Education (DfE) and Chief Medical Officer to provide you with guidance on mild illness and school attendance.

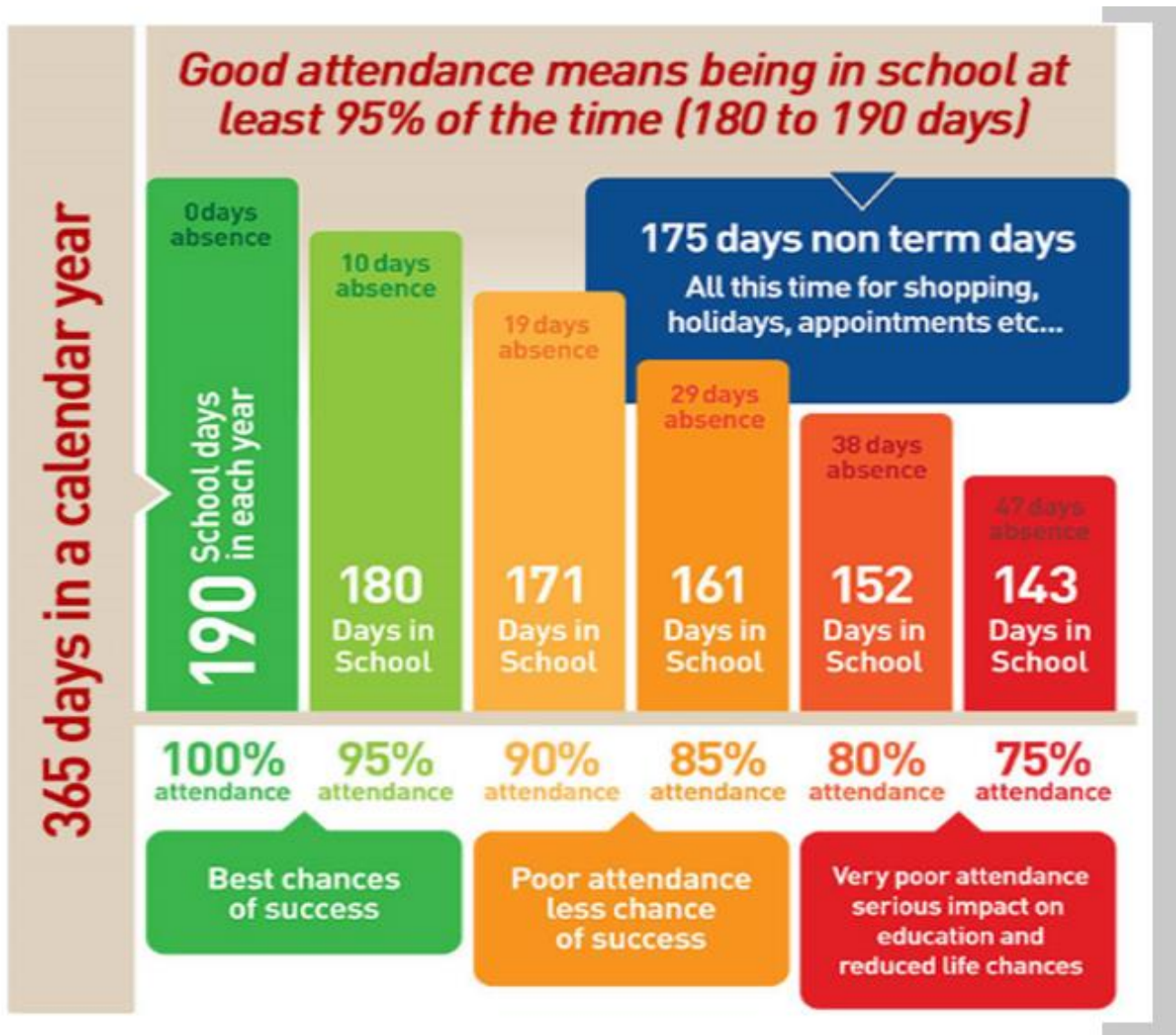
We are aware that the COVID-19 pandemic may have caused some parents to feel less confident with assessing whether their child is well enough to be in school, so we have laid out some information which we hope you will find helpful.

There is wide agreement among health professionals and educational professionals that school attendance is vital to the life chances of children and young people. Being in school improves health, wellbeing and socialisation throughout the life course. The greatest benefits come from children and young people attending school regularly. It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above. We would encourage you to look at the NHS 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance, which has further information. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

In addition to respiratory illnesses, we are aware that more children may be absent from school due to symptoms of anxiety than before the pandemic. Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it. The DfE has published useful guidance on mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools>

For those who are experiencing persistent symptoms of anxiety we encourage you to speak to your child's class teacher, or Mrs Reynolds our Mental Health Lead, and they will be more than happy to support you.

For the benefit of our children we always aim for 97% attendance and above, this improves children's long-term academic outcomes, mental health and wellbeing. This graphic below helpfully displays our expectations and the impact of school absence.



A two week holiday in term time means the highest attendance you can achieve is 94.5%. We understand it is less expensive to go on holiday during term time, but the impact this has on your child's education is profound, particularly if your child misses the first few weeks of the school year in September when new routines and expectations are put in place and class teachers are assessing how best to help their new pupils learn.

If you feel you need support in improving your child's attendance, please do speak to us.

Thank you for your continued commitment to supporting the health and wellbeing of our children.

Kind regards,

Mrs E Birch
Headteacher