



# Hartest Primary School

Hartest Church of England Primary School  
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THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of St Edmundsbury  
and Ipswich

*“Developing the whole child”*

28<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have started our academic year with an unusual amount of unauthorised holiday absence. In light of this I would like to bring to your attention our Attendance Policy and guidelines that we follow from the Educational Welfare Officer and the Multi Academy Trust. Our full policy is available on the school website as are other attendance documents you may find useful and interesting.

Our attendance policy clearly states the following:

**At Hartest CE Primary School consideration will be made to issuing penalty notices after the 6<sup>th</sup> unauthorised session (3 days) whether on consecutive days or within a 12 week period.**

As has been stated in previous newsletters we are visited by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) during each half of term. During these visits he monitors the school's overall attendance figures. National guidelines are that every school should have an overall attendance figure of 96% and any child with attendance falling below 95% is noted by the EWO and their attendance is monitored.

Going forward during this academic year we will be making Penalty Notice Referrals as per the statement above. I do not do this lightly but regular school attendance is paramount in your child succeeding in their education and I am disappointed in the rise of term time holidays that I have seen during my time here.

In addition to monitoring attendance the EWO will check that the school knows where every child is when they are absent and that we have the correct evidence to prove the absence. Our current procedures are robust and support the safeguarding of children within our school which is why we ask parents to supply a note following any absence and ideally a doctor's note or letter evidencing any medical appointments.

I have attached the guidelines from the Multi Academy Trust for your perusal as well as important bullet points from the Attendance Policy.

Yours sincerely,

Mr M Coombs  
Head Teacher

## **Attendance and Absence Policy: Essential Points**

- The school day starts at **8.40am**. The register will be called promptly at **8:45 am** and **1.00 pm** by each class teacher
- First Day Calling: Hartest CE Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence.
- Hartest CE Primary School's policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. Hartest CE Primary School will **ONLY** consider authorising holidays for:
  - service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays in the school holiday period;
  - when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
  - parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Parents taking holidays during the school term should apply in writing two weeks before the holiday date giving reasons for the absence. The school will make the decision as to whether a holiday is authorised or unauthorised

- All holiday absences during SATs testing periods will be unauthorized.

### **Parents' / carers' responsibilities**

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Hartest CE Primary School.

Hartest CE Primary School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Hartest CE Primary School on the first day of absence by telephone (messages can be left on the answerphone) or email