

EVERY DAY COUNTS

Primary School Attendance

Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education. Children learn new things at school every day – missing school puts them at a disadvantage.

Why attendance is important

At Hillcross we want all of our children to get the very best education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with them coming to school each and every day.

If your child misses school regularly, they miss out on learning the fundamental skills that will set them up for success in the later years of school.

There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a child misses puts them at a disadvantage and can affect their educational outcomes.

Each missed day can lead to progressively lower achievement, a lack of confidence and poor self-esteem.

Getting in early

Attendance patterns are established early – a child regularly missing days in nursery or in the early years of school will often continue to miss classes in the later years, and consequently their learning and social development suffers. It's vital that students go to school every day – even in the early years of primary school.

Why does absence occur?

The main reasons for absence are:

Sickness – There are always times when children need to miss school, such as when they're ill. It's vital that they're only away on the days they are genuinely sick, and setting good sleep patterns, eating well and exercising regularly can make a big difference.

Health Appointments – A range of agencies work with families to support the development and well-being of children. Please try wherever possible to arrange appointment times outside of school hours. Where this is not possible you will be asked to provide evidence in the form of a letter, an appointment card, an email or a text confirmation from the agency your child is attending.

"Day off" – Think twice before letting your child have a "day off" as they could fall behind their classmates – every day counts.

Visiting Relatives – Close links with extended families are vitally important but please arrange for visits to take place during the school holidays. If an unforeseen visit is necessary during term time please consider all alternatives before taking your child out of school – Can one parent remain at home until the school holidays? Is there another relative your child can stay with?

Term time holidays - It's vital that holidays are planned during school holidays and not during the term if it can be avoided.

An absence for holidays or to visit relatives will not be authorised unless the family can provide evidence of extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave.

Any leave of absence that is not authorised is very likely to result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the London Borough of Merton. The penalty notice currently carries a fine of £120 per parent per child.



Working Together

At Hillcross we work in partnership with our families. Openly communicating with us about all absences is a good way to prevent attendance issues being escalated. If you are having attendance issues with your child, please let your class teacher know so that we can work together to get your child to school every day.

All children whose attendance is under 90% are considered by the Local Authority as 'persistent absentees' and there is an expectation that schools and parents work together to ensure the child's attendance improves as quickly as possible if it falls below this figure. If improvements do not occur we will have to refer the case to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Officer, who will contact you directly.

Please make sure that your child has the very best start to their education by ensuring that they attend school regularly. Remember, every day counts.