



July 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Improving School Attendance

We are writing to inform you about important updates regarding pupil attendance that will be implemented across all schools in Cumbria, in line with the new guidance which will become statutory in September 2024:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf

Improving pupil attendance is a top priority nationwide, including Cumbria. Research consistently shows that there is a strong positive link between regular attendance and education outcomes. Pupils who attend school regularly are more likely to achieve better outcomes and develop essential social and emotional skills. As such, we are committed to ensuring that **ALL** pupils have the best possible attendance record.

From September 2024, all schools will be assigned a Local Authority Attendance Officer who will be responsible for those children whose attendance is a concern. These officers will work closely with schools and families to establish which children are causing concern and will:

- offer communication and advice;
- targeted support meetings;
- multi-disciplinary support;
- and, where necessary, legal intervention.

In alignment with the Local Authority's initiative to enhance attendance, we will be consistent in our approach across our school cluster to address attendance issues. This means that all schools within our cluster will be taking a firm stance on poor attendance. We will challenge instances of absenteeism to ensure that pupils in our area are receiving the education they deserve.

Please be reminded that headteachers are not in the position to authorise holidays during term time.

“The DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday for other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.”

(Working Together to Improve School Attendance Statutory Guidance)

Please note that any legal action, such as prosecutions for non-attendance, will not be handled by the schools but by the attendance officers. Efforts will be made to implement measures to prevent absenteeism, with fines being automated and issued as necessary. We believe that by working together, we can work with families to improve attendance rates before legal action is taken, and, consequently, improve the educational outcomes for all our pupils.

We appreciate your continued support in ensuring your child has the best opportunities for success.

Yours sincerely,

Headteachers of PoMS

Our local cluster is known as 'PoMS' (Partnership of Millom Schools). The schools in our local cluster are:

- Blackcombe Junior School
- Captain Shaw's C of E Primary School
- Haverigg Primary School
- Millom Infant School
- Millom School
- Parkview Nursery
- St James' Catholic Primary School
- Thwaites School