

Milecastle Primary School

Hillhead Parkway, Chapel House, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE5 1LH

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Head teacher: Mrs S Richardson

Thursday 11th January 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

We all know how important school attendance is. Hopefully you have recently seen or heard the Department for Education (DfE) and Newcastle City Council's campaign targeting school attendance which is currently in the media. The campaign is part of the DfE's strategy to support pupils and families to improve attendance and sits alongside the much more rigorous approach schools are required to take to monitor and improve and challenge no-attendance.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other pupils. Medical advice is clear however that children with **mild illness** will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance <https://www.nenc-healthiertgether.nhs.uk/parents/carers/worried-your-child-unwell/child-unwell-ok-go-nurseryschool> is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Milecastle Primary School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that parents can have a significant effect on absences during the academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that your child comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this so please let us know if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

From January, we will be changing some of our communication with parents about attendance as we will be using letters **provided by the Local Authority** which have been written to support schools with improving attendance. The letters will only be used if school is requesting medical evidence for repeated absences, if your child's absence is going to be internally monitored, if your child has persistent absence (90% or less) or if a parenting contract is being offered.



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The Local Authority letters detail possible consequences of your child's non-attendance as it is a parent's legal requirement to ensure that their child is on time and attends school on a regular basis

We will continue to send out traffic light letters at the end of term and our Family Support Officer, Jan Gurkin, will continue to contact parents and offer support and/or advice regarding absence concerns from school. Jan contacts parents via the telephone as well as completing home visits where appropriate.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mrs Richardson
Head Teacher

