



**Donington Cowley Endowed Primary School**  
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**St Gilbert of Sempringham C of E Primary School**  
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**Executive Headteacher – Sophie Foston**

4<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Dear Parent/Carer

As we look forward to welcoming you back this academic year, we must look at ensuring our attendance is a strong part of Horizon Schools Federation. Ideally, every child would attend school every single day to make the most of every learning opportunity available. However, we do understand that there may be occasions where children are unwell, or due to personal circumstance they are unable to attend. Our school priorities for attendance this year are to ensure that:

- Our whole school attendance is at least 97% or above
- Children will attend school every day that school is open
- Children will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day
- Families will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

If your child's attendance drops below 95% you will be contacted and offered support to help improve your child's attendance.

Should your child's attendance drop below 90%, they are recorded as a persistent absentee. These children are closely monitored, and it may be that throughout the year, meetings are organised to address any issues and offer support. Please be aware that persistent absenteeism will also be dealt with through our Safeguarding procedures. Failure to ensure your child regularly attends school is categorised as Educational Neglect.

To breakdown the importance of attendance I would like to share some figures with you. During this academic year, we have 190 school days. To have attendance of 90% that's equates to a child missing a month of school per year, on average 1 day every two weeks and this will have a detrimental effect on their achievement: considerably impacting your child's progress both academically and personally.

In August 2024 changes in the law were made surrounding unauthorised absence. **Please read the document 'School Attendance – Changes in Law August 2024' which is attached.**

Term time holidays will not be authorised and will be subject to Penalty Notice, (fine) by the Local Authority.

If you wish to seek approval for any request of absence for your child(ren) from School, then you must apply in writing to the Headteacher, at least 1 month in advance of the requested absence. You should only then remove your child(ren) if the absence has been authorised and notified to you in writing by the school. Any exceptional circumstances must be clearly set out in the written request to the Headteacher who will consider each case upon its merits.

If you then choose to take your child out of school during term time and it is not deemed to be exceptional circumstances and/or has not been approved by the school, then this will be coded as an unauthorised absence and a Penalty Notice will be issued for the period of absence. Failure to pay may result in further legal action being taken against you.

A Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school under the following legislation:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act W
- Working together to improve school attendance – February 2024 Applies from 19 August 2024

Please note: A Penalty Notice can also be issued if your child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from their school.

Leave of absence for a child will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

We are extremely grateful to our families that contact the office or notify via parent mail of their child's attendance regarding any absences that the child may have. Please can I ask that we continue to phone the school office or notify via parent mail if your child is unwell and unable to attend school. This should take place again each day your child remains absent. For example, if your child is absent on Monday and Tuesday you should make contact both days. Where we do not receive parental contact regarding an absence a Safe & Well check may be carried out at the child's home address.

Yours Sincerely,

*Sarah-Jane Millard*

Mrs Sarah-Jane Millard  
Inclusion Lead