Dear Parent / Carer

Tuesday 6 September 2011

School Attendance

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Education Support Manager. I am very pleased to be joining the staff at St Joseph’s Primary School and I look forward to meeting all the children and parents over the next few weeks.

One of my responsibilities will be pupil attendance. This is a whole school priority as there are clear links between levels of attendance and levels of attainment. Teachers plan different lessons for every school day so a day missed at school is a day of missed learning opportunities.

Children are expected to attend school every day if they are fit and well enough to do so. If your child is very unwell, or a situation occurs which means your child cannot attend school, please ensure you make contact with the school office by 9.00am on the first day of absence. Out of concern for the safety and well-being of children, parents will receive a telephone call or text message if the school has not received a reason for absence.

When your child returns to school from any period of absence, s/he must also bring in written confirmation explaining the reason for absence. I will then decide if the absence will be classified as ‘authorised’ or ‘unauthorised’ on the official school records. Parents will be informed by letter if the absence is recorded as ‘unauthorised’.

When a child’s absence falls below 95%, a ‘cause for concern’ letter will be issued to the parents and they will be asked to attend a meeting at the school. If there are reasons why your child’s attendance at school may be affected (such as medical problems or personal circumstances) it is important that you speak with me at the earliest opportunity.

Requests for taking your child out of school for extenuating circumstances during school time can only be authorised by the Headteacher. You will be required to complete a leave of absence form, which is available from the school office, thereafter you will be requested to attend an interview with the Headteacher or myself. Failure to do so will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded on your child’s attendance record which will generate an automatic referral to the Education Welfare Service. They may take you to Court under Section 444 of The Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly, thereafter you can be fined up to £2500 and/or imprisoned for up to 3 months.

Please note that holidays during term time will not be authorised. Children taken on holiday during term time will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence and this may result in your child being removed from the schools register. This means you will need to apply to Brent Admissions for a place in another school.

If your child attended St Joseph’s during the last academic year, you will find her/his record of attendance for 2010/2011 printed on the reverse of this letter. If you wish to meet me to discuss any aspect of your child’s attendance, please make an appointment at the school office.

Yours sincerely

Mrs B Studd
Education Support Manager