

Appendix 3: Broken weeks – attendance information for parents:

Broken Weeks! Please avoid them!

One of the things that impacts most negatively on children's progress is if children have odd days off here and there over the year that disrupts a week's learning. Those who monitor attendance in school call these 'broken weeks'.

Good learning in school is reliant on building learning links, lesson by lesson and day by day. If one of these links is missed then the whole programme of learning can be disrupted, leaving children confused and falling behind. In short, every lesson counts!

In addition, absence can affect friendships, with the break in social continuity, and children losing that sense of 'belonging'. Such influences cannot be underestimated as children's happiness, and so success, in school is often affected by friendships. This is particularly the case in Infants and the Early Years where friendship groups are just establishing.

All of the above can lead to a downward spiral with children feeling 'disconnected' and finding work difficult because of missed learning. Accordingly, we often end up with such children not wanting to attend.

The government (DFE) document 'The link between absence and attainment' (available online) points out that even a small drop in attendance can negatively affect a child's success in school. We see this in school, with our low attending children being amongst the worst attaining children.

Given all of the above we would urge parents to be stringent when making the decision to keep children off school.

The NHS give some very good guidance on this, making the point that even if a child feels under the weather then they need to be in school. Some of this advice is copied overleaf.

Basically, the rule needs to be, use parental judgement to decide if your child is actually ill to the extent that they cannot participate in lessons, otherwise dose a child with Calpol and send them in! If your child's condition deteriorates during the school day then we will always contact you. Please be assured, we always have your child's best interest at heart and would not keep them in school if they were not well enough to be here.

I appreciate the temptation as a loving parent is to keep children off school at the slightest sign of anything but in the long run it does not help their performance in school.

