

Attendance Policy – October 2018

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents/carers to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. We encourage children to attend, and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment and progress in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside and collaboratively with others

The Governors, Head Teacher, and School Staff, in partnership with parents/carers, have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

Parental Responsibility

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk. The school share the attendance percentage with parents/carers at each parent's meeting and more frequently where there are concerns.

It is the parents/carers' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent using the school app. This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that the child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8.40am and 8.50am, when the doors are open and children go straight into their classrooms. All children who arrive late (after 8.50am) must report to the school office where they are registered and the reason for lateness is recorded. Children who arrive late are required to make up the minutes of lost learning time during their break time on that day.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement and progress by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents/carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2 aged children in order to promote good habits from an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, staff and the Education Inclusion Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility and self-discipline.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and stage of development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents/carers, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For

example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/carer telephones the school to explain the absence.

- **Only a member of the SLT in school can make an absence authorised.** Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised.
- **Unauthorised absence**
- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

Procedures

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain accurate registration processes.
- To maintain accurate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To work with parents/carers to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Informing The Head of Pastoral Care and Inclusion where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.

- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at parents/carers meetings where necessary.

Head of Pastoral Care and Inclusion

The Headteacher has overall responsibility however delegates day to day responsibility to The Head of Pastoral Care and Inclusion which includes:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the Education Inclusion Service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Education Inclusion Service.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence and then working within The Early Help Framework to establish appropriate support plans.

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence.
- Contacting parents/carers of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Head of Pastoral Care and Inclusion.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence using the school app.
- Attempting to make appointments out of school hours.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence school requires evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter).
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

All the school doors open at 8.40am until 8.50am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classrooms.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00am and by 1.00pm. (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present). These registers are then returned to the school office.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of six years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 8.50am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.50am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than **9:10am** will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.05am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning time, often the most important aspect, at the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

ABSENCES

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence before 8:50am. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is

authorised or unauthorised. The Senior Leadership Team have the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then a text message is sent requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. (attendance Code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent/carer to check the reasons for the child's absence.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services and seek advice on next steps.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of head teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of no less than 100%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their Primary School career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly.

The Education Inclusion Officer may issue penalty notices to parents/carers where there has been a referral to Education Inclusion Service from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office staff, have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Head of Pastoral Care and Inclusion to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents/carers or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers.

The Head of Pastoral Care and Inclusion reports termly (or more often if significant concerns are highlighted) to the Head teacher and Governors' in relation to attendance.