

# ATTENDANCE

## Purpose of the policy

Attendance at school is compulsory and a legal requirement unless special arrangements for other forms of education are made with the education authority. Pupil absence can have a significant impact on their progress and attainment. All absence should be authorised and recorded in a daily register and punctuality encouraged. This ensures children make a good start to each day and develop good habits that are important throughout life.

## Aims

- To promote the importance of school attendance
- To work with families to encourage and support good school attendance
- To provide clear guidelines on monitoring attendance and linking this to attainment
- To reduce the amount of persistent absence
- To deal effectively with unauthorised absence and reduce this
- To reduce the number of authorised absences where possible
- To encourage all children to attend school and be punctual
- To raise attainment by ensuring children are in school as much as they can be

## Procedures

### 1. Registers:

- 1.1 All schools must keep two registers of pupils. The admissions register, which records the personal details of every pupil at the school, and the attendance register which records every pupil's attendance at every session the school is open to pupil
- 1.2 Teachers record attendance at the beginning of each session (half day) and any absences recorded on the register. The Admin. Officer then enters data onto electronic system (SIMS)
- 1.3 Reception children are inducted into school prior to their statutory start date so that every child is given a good start to school life.
- 1.4 *Registration* is between 8.45 and 9:00 am in the morning, and 12:45 and 1:00 in the afternoon. All children arriving in school after these times are recorded in the register by office staff and will be recorded as being "late".
- 1.5 *Registers close* at 9:00 in the morning, and at 1:00 in the afternoon. All children arriving in school after these times are signed in by parents or office staff and then recorded in the register by office staff.
- 1.6 Registers are kept for 5 years before being destroyed
- 1.7 Registers are held in the office. In the event of a fire drill these will be taken outside to the meeting point by the Admin Assistant. Staff should keep a headcount of children when the register is taken at the beginning of each session.

## 2. Attendance:

- 2.1 Any absences must be accounted for through a phone call to school by 9.30am on each day of absence.
- 2.2 Where there is a concern about the first day absence then the parents will be phoned by the school to encourage attendance.
- 2.3 Some absences may be approved by the school, these include:-
  - Educational visits, approved sporting activities and educational offsite provision all count as present.
  - Holiday leave (maximum of 10 days over the year (10 sessions over a 6 month period) for a planned family holiday that cannot be taken at any other time)
  - Medical / dental appointments where these cannot be taken outside of the school day
  - Absences will only be authorised where the absence could not reasonably have been avoided and is at the discretion of the Headteacher
- 2.4 Targets for absence may be set with the LA with an aim of reducing absence from school where school absence levels are causing concern

## 3. Holiday requests

- 3.1 The regulations make it clear that parents do not have any right to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term-time holiday.
- 3.2 The regulations do state that Headteachers may, in certain circumstances, grant up to 10 school-days leave in a school year.
- 3.3 The Governing Body understands that there are occasions when a family has no choice about when to take holidays, such as when the whole workplace closes down and employees all take their holiday at that time, or other situations which are outside the family control. Such occasions shall be taken into consideration by the Headteacher when the decision to authorise absence is made and evidence to support this must be supplied on application for leave.
- 3.4 The Headteacher will use their discretion to grant authorised absence in a school year if the parent or carer with whom the child normally lives applies to the school in advance of the holiday and there are special reasons for the holiday. The Headteacher will judge each holiday request on a case by case basis.
- 3.5 Parents are requested not to arrange family holidays during term-time. Leave for term- time holidays will not normally be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances which might justify it. The School may take into consideration:
  - *the time of the year for the proposed trip*
  - *the time of the holiday in relation to statutory test dates, other planned test dates in the school calendar*
  - *the overall attendance pattern of the pupils' concerned*
  - *any holidays already taken in the school year*
  - *the age and stage of education of the pupils concerned*
  - *wishes of parents and/or carers*
  
  - *the ability of the pupils' concerned to catch up the work they have missed*
  - *the reason for the absence request during term time.*

The school will not take into consideration:

- *the availability of cheap holidays*
- *the availability of desired accommodation*
- *poor weather experienced during school holiday periods*
- *overlap with the beginning or end of term*

**Holidays will not be authorised during SATs weeks or for pupils who attendance is causing concern.**

- 3.6 Occasionally holidays of more than 10 days to visit family overseas may be unavoidable. In such circumstances the School recognises the importance and significance such visits often have, however, we would wish to ensure that a positive discussion with parents / carers takes place beforehand because of the likely impact of extended leave upon the child's education. Again it is expected that this will be a one off occasion and not a regular expectation.
- 3.7 There may be circumstances where a special education plan may be put into place on the child's return and the school will liaise with parents / carers about the best way to help their child.
- 3.8 If the school refuses a request for term-time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. The school reserves the right to refer the case to the LA who may invoke a Penalty Notice under the Education Act 1996, as amended by Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. A penalty notice can be issued to a parent when a pupil has missed 10 half day sessions from school within a 10 school week period and these absences are due to holiday.
- 3.9 Children who are excluded for a fixed term under 5 days will be required to remain at home and complete work. Where the exclusion is longer than 5 days alternative provision must be made by the school. Only permanent exclusion will result in a child being removed from the register.
- 3.10 A specific code will be used to cover absence due to traveller children on the move
- 3.11 Under the regulations, schools must authorise absence that is due to religious observance but the day must be:
- exclusively set apart for religious observance; and
  - set apart by the parents' religious body (not the parents).
- 3.12 Staggered entry into school will be kept to a minimum to ensure all children get their full entitlement to statutory education
- 3.13 Reception age children are not exempt from the guidance set in this policy. Any further legal action linked to non-attendance at school will not be enforced due to age. Full terms of this policy will be applied once children reach statutory school age.

#### **4. Monitoring attendance, and supporting families to improve attendance**

- 4.1 The Admin Officer checks all registers each day and updates the registers based on phone messages and letters using the SIMS codes. It is the schools responsibility to classify absences, not the parent.

- 4.2 The registers will be monitored once every week by the school Admin Officer, and headteacher who will be looking at lateness, attendance, authorised and unauthorised absence and identifying any children who are frequently absent.
- 4.3 Absence categories as follows:

100%	Excellent
95-100 %	Good
90-95 %	Satisfactory
85-90 %	Causing concern
80-85 %	Worrying
Below 80 %	At risk

- 4.4 Any unexplained absence will be followed up by the Admin Officer and Admin Assistant by phone on the morning of absence by 9.30am to establish reason for absence. If there is no response to this, the Admin Officer or Assistant will make a home visit by 10am to ensure that the school has a reason for non-attendance that ensures the child's safety (ie walking to school – may have left home, but not arrived at school – home and school would not know if the non-attendance was not followed up by school immediately).
- 4.5 Where there is a pattern of regular lateness a letter will be sent to parents seeking an improvement to this. A letter will be sent home when a pupil arrives late for registration on 6 or more occasions in one short school term. Where there are patterns of unacceptable attendance then a formal letter and meeting will follow where clear targets for improvement are set. If this pattern of absence continues to cause concern then the LA will be involved and fines may be given.
- 4.6 If all actions in 4.4 have resulted in the school being unable to ascertain the safety of a child then the EWO will be informed and if necessary the police.
- 4.7 If a child is withdrawn for home education then the school will inform the EWO immediately
- 4.8 The role of the EWO is to support the school and family in order to either get improved attendance or to take legal action when appropriate.
- 4.9 There may be cases of non-attendance where a pupil is school phobic or suffering from emotional distress. Parents will be fully supported and external support agencies involved. A program for re-integration will be agreed with the Education Welfare Officer.
- 4.10 Where a child transfers to another school the existing school will notify the new school where possible and the new school will request pupil records within 15 days. A common transfer form is completed by the existing school and sent with the pupil records
- 4.11 A referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service when a child has 15% non-attendance.

## **5. Illness**

- 5.1 If a child is feeling unwell but not exhibiting any specific symptoms then they may be sent to school and staff must be informed so that they can be monitored.
- 5.2 If a child becomes unwell at school then the parents will be informed and if appropriate may fetch them home.
- 5.3 After sickness or diarrhoea children should stay at home for 24 hours since the last symptoms.

- 5.4 Children with headlice should be treated at home and parents are asked to inform the school so that information leaflets for parents can be sent out. Children must not be kept off school because of headlice.
- 5.5 If children have long term absence due to illness, parents and teachers will work together to ensure learning continues while the child is absent. There may also be circumstances where a special education plan may be put into place on the child's return and the school will liaise with parents / carers about the best way to help their child
- 5.6 A Personal Education Plan will be put in place for any child who is or likely to be absent from school for more than 15 continuous school days as a result of illness. This request for alternative educational provision will be completed by the school and sent to the Education Welfare Officer.
6. **Elective Home Education**
- 6.1 If a parent chooses to withdraw their child from school and educate him / her at home they must inform the school of this intention in writing. If a parent does not inform the school in writing the child will remain on school roll and non-attendance procedures will be followed.
- 6.2 The Education Welfare Officer / Local Authority will be notified by the Head teacher as soon as the child is removed from roll. The EWO will monitor closely all pupils who are home educated.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **The Governors are responsible for:**

- Ensuring the school maintains and improves attendance levels and achievement for all children

### **The Headteacher is responsible for:**

- Ensuring children attend school and that absences are kept to a minimum
- Meeting with the SLT to monitor the impact of attendance on behaviour, attitudes and achievement
- Authorising absences from school
- Meeting with families where attendance is a concern and targeting improvement
- Referring to the LA, absence which continues to cause concern, despite school interventions
- Reporting information on attendance to the Governing body
- Annually reporting to the Governing body giving details of any referrals
- Working with the EWO to support vulnerable children and families

### **The Admin Assistant is responsible for:**

- Ensuring that registers are completed each day within specified times, monitoring the completion of registers
- Registering late children
- Monitoring all absence and lateness and bringing this information to the attention of the Headteacher
- Sending out letters from the head teacher to parents of children causing concern and arranging follow up meetings as required.

- Passing on all absence information to class teachers
- Phoning parents of all families on the first day of absence, if they have not made contact with school

**The staff are responsible for:**

- Ensuring the register is taken promptly
- Liaising with the parents of children taking holidays or who have long term absence due to illness, to ensure children's learning needs continue to be met and work is set to support this

**Parents are responsible for:**

- Ensuring their child has maximum attendance at school – including not taking term time holidays and arranging appointments out of school hours and/or in school holidays
- Informing the school if their child is ill
- Bringing to the schools attention any illness or medical information that may have an implication for others ie, measles, slap cheek, toilet needs
- Ensuring their child is well enough to come to school, promoting good attendance and punctuality
- Providing up to date contact details in case of their child being taken ill at school

## **Monitoring and Evaluating the impact**

This policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and Governors and will be considered effective if the following criteria are fulfilled:

- Children enjoy coming to school and attendance is good
- All families are well supported in ensuring their children attend school
- Attendance is at least in line with and often above the national average
- Authorised and unauthorised absences are lower than the national average
- Every opportunity is taken by the school to engage children in their learning even when not attending