

# Attendance Policy

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Updated April 2009

## **Introduction**

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. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

The school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## **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 or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, or for home tuition this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

### **Unauthorised absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### **If a child is absent**

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. Parents should telephone the school before 9:15am on the first day of absence to inform the school of the reason for the absence.

When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence. A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

**Requests for leave of absence**

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance.

Holidays during term time are strongly discouraged due to the inevitable disruption caused to learning. Regulation 8 Education [Pupil Registration Regulation 1995 (Amended)] gives schools discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of an annual holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and in law, have to apply for permission in advance.

Such permission is granted at the discretion of the headteacher and no more than one period of holiday of no more than ten school days in any academic year can be authorised. Holidays are not authorised in September or May. However, even if permission is granted it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian, not the teacher, to ensure that their child catches up any work missed.

**Long-term absence**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, pupils can use the VLE and web services to keep up with work at school.

**Repeated unauthorised absences**

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LEA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The school has a duty to report an unexplained absence of 10 consecutive school days to the local authority.

**Rewards for good attendance**

All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special gold certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

**Penalty Notices**

Penalty notices for absence from school can be issued by the Attendance and Behaviour Service based on requests from schools and the police. The following circumstances are considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of Penalty Notices:

- Truancy, including truancy sweeps
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Excessive holidays in term time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed

A pupil has to be absent from school in one of these circumstances for at least 10 sessions in any term before the issuing of a Penalty Notice can be considered. Following a request by the school for the issuing of a Penalty Notice a check is made by the Attendance and Behaviour Service that the request meets the conditions of the Code of Conduct. A warning letter will then be sent to parents explaining that unless their child attends full time for the next 15 days a Penalty Notice will be

issued. Where a Penalty Notice is issued, each parent is required to pay a fine to the Local Authority.

**Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the headteacher to monitor overall attendance and for this policy.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.