

Attendance Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body are responsible for making sure 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.

2 Definitions

2.1 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 or telephones the school to explain the absence.
Authorised absence can be:
 - Illness
 - Medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside school hours
 - Days of religious observation
 - Holidays – a maximum of 10 days in an academic year
- 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, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 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.

Unauthorised absence is:

- Truancy
- Staying at home to look after younger children or sick relatives
- Going shopping or having hair cut
- Any absence which the school is not informed about, either by telephone or letter
- Any family holiday of more than 10 days during an academic year

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1** We ask parents/carers to help the office by notifying us of all absences on the first day, after 8.30 a.m. If the school has not received notification of absence by 10.30a.m on the first day of absence, we will contact parents by phone.
- 3.2** The school day starts at 8.50. Registers are marked shortly after this time. When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office. Children arriving after 8.50 will be given a late after the close of register mark. Any pupil arriving after 9.00 must report to the school office and be entered in the late book. Any pupil arriving after 9.00 will receive an unauthorised absence mark. The afternoon session starts at 12.45pm.
- 3.3** When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- 3.3** A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.4** 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.

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1** 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, but normally this request will be granted.
- 4.2** Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from school for up to ten days for an annual holiday. We naturally prefer parents to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods, but recognize that this is not always possible. Family holidays are authorised by the Head Teacher, on behalf of the governing body. A letter accompanies authorisations to parents explain the detrimental effect of holidays in term time.
- 4.3** We will not authorise requests for holiday absence during periods of testing and examination.

Holiday leave will not be authorized where a child has a history of poor attendance.

Requests totaling more than 10 days a year are subject to individual approval by the headteacher.

Requests for leave for modeling, show rehearsals and performance are not at the heads discretion but subject to LA approval. Professional work must be licensed by the local authority. Absences are never authorised for a child to work. Absences to attend a Religious Festival will be authorised by the school.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1 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 LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation. Absence of more than 20% will result in the Education Welfare Officer being contacted. In certain circumstances unauthorized absences may lead to court proceedings, fast track to prosecution or a penalty notice (including lates after close of register and unauthorized holidays).
- 6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1 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 incentives for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year .

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The

school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1** It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2** The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3** The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.
- 9.4** 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.
- 9.5** This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Signed: *Ruth Ellis*

Date: October 08