



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Approved: October 2017

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*“What you are is God’s gift
to you, what you become
is your gift to God”*

INTRODUCTION:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance;
- Report to you termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with school, including parents, pupils, staff and governors.
- Set targets to improve whole-school attendance.

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

- Nationally, absence in 2016 / 17 was 4% on average.
- All Saints absence in 2016 / 17 was 3%.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this in writing by the head teacher.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority Attendance Team.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence (leave a message on the automated message service);
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception

IF YOUR CHILD IS ABSENT WE WILL:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Head teacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Attendance Officer linked with school if attendance moves below 85% as per Local Authority protocol.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always

have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

IN-SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE/PUNCTUALITY:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. School may consider using the following strategies to help support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality.

This includes:

- Meetings in school between parents, pupils, pastoral staff and the Head teacher
- Parenting contracts (Home-School Agreements)
- Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and/ or referral to outside agencies (including the Local Authority Attendance Officer)
- Regular communication with parents about school's current attendance figures as well as their child's(ren's). School attendance will be on the newsletter. Parents will be informed in writing if their child attendance drops below 96%
- Penalty notices

THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ATTENDANCE OFFICER:

If difficulties cannot be sorted out using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

LATENESS:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

HOW WE MANAGE LATENESS:

The school day starts at 8.55 am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 9.05 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30 am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and/or a class teacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. From the 1st September 2013, any holidays taken during term time will not be authorised. It is important that you understand that any holidays taken within term time usually will not be authorised and that any holiday taken without the agreement of the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as Penalty Notices.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

All applications for leave must be made in advance using the 'Request for leave of absence' form from the school office. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually but only in exceptional circumstances, (e.g. Serious illness of a close relative/armed forces personnel returning from active duty, farming seasonal closure pattern or factory/business work closure pattern) might 'leave of absence' be authorised by the school.

Parents will be asked to submit a written application giving details of the exceptional circumstances surrounding the request for leave.

Full details of our policy and procedures are available from the school, but it is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time might not be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS) or any other public examinations.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (95%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.
- Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

RELIGIOUS ABSENCE:

The school may authorise leave of absence in connection with religious festivals. Parents must request this in writing.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ATTENDANCE MATTERS IN THIS SCHOOL:

Parents:

- Ensure children attend regularly and punctually
- Contact school on 1st day of absence
- Avoid holidays in term time wherever possible and apply in advance using form
- Attendance at meetings in school
- Participation in Parenting Contracts and Common Assessment Framework, and cooperate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies

Pupils:

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school, e.g. early bedtime
- Attend school/registration punctually
- Speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on school attendance
- Cooperate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies

Headteacher / (School Attendance Lead):

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters
- Ensure adequate, protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance

Designated Staff:

- First day response: Administrative Officer(s) contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided
- Input and update the attendance registers
- Regularly identify and monitor pupil, class and whole school attendance and punctuality levels, particularly that of vulnerable groups
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance and using Parenting Contracts where appropriate

All School Staff:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- To see pupils' attendance as the responsibility of all school staff
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures

Governors:

- Adopt the whole-school policy and review regularly
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy
- Agree statutory targets for the school

SCHOOL TARGETS, PROJECTS AND SPECIAL INITIATIVES:

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Our attendance target for 2017 –2018 is 97.3%

Our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in surrounding area.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Three times a year we send out colour coded letters to share with parents their child's attendance to date and what this is like compared to school and national averages.

When a child's attendance drops below a certain percentage, this triggers individualised letters informing parents that their child's attendance has dropped. Support is offered. The letter provides a reminder of the importance of good attendance.

The thresholds:

- Attendance drops below 97% - target Letter A Sent to state attendance has dropped below school
- Attendance drops below 95% - Support offered. Letter B Sent to state attendance is a cause for concern.
- Attendance drops below 90% - Support Team. Letter C Sent. Support in place. Referral to LCC Attendance

Cohort attendance is shared weekly on the newsletter.

100% attendance awards are held 3 times a year when a certificate and badge are provided.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in the newsletter and we ask for your full support.

SUMMARY:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.