

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overestimated. Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a good education and securing it must, therefore, be a high priority for school staff, governors, LA, parents and the pupils themselves. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils diminish the value of education provided for them. They may also damage the learning of others because fluctuations in the size of pupil group may restrict the scope for effective teaching.



OUR MAIN PRINCIPLE

EVERY CHILD MATTERS
LEARNING WELL
PARTICIPATING
PLAYING WELL
STAYING SAFE
WELL BEING

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority.

All children are sometimes unhappy about attending school. Families can be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties, are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child at an early stage. If a 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 school attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by staff at the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ***parents keeping children off school without a good reason***
- ***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***

Parents are expected to contact school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may offer parents a formal Parenting Contract or refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement wherever possible but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use legal proceedings if required, including Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecution. Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

ILLNESS OR OTHER LEGITIMATE REASON.

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents should contact the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am. If the absence is prolonged then parents should continue to contact the school on the third day and every two days after this with a regular update. Absence will not be authorised without this procedure. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of the child's illness, such as a doctor's note may be required. Parents should send a written explanation of absence to school with the pupil on their return. This school has a legal duty to inform the Local Authority of any pupil whose attendance is considered poor or failing. Parents may be offered a Parenting Contract to help address any attendance issues. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdressing appointments, etc. Leave may however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or from medical appointments which take place during school time.

HOLIDAY

All holiday in term time is at the sole discretion of the Head teacher. Leave for up to 10 days can be granted by the Head teacher as long as the pupil's attendance record is otherwise satisfactory. All requests for holiday in term time must be made in writing and a holiday form completed. Holiday requests will be refused where children have missed a lot of work or at crucial times of the school year (e.g. during examinations) or if their attendance is not up to the required level.

Requests for extended holiday will be considered on a case-by case basis and will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

LATENESS

Parents are expected to ensure that their children arrive to school in time for registration. The register will be taken by 8.55 a.m. in the morning and for the afternoon 1.50 p.m. Pupils who arrive after that time for school will be marked in the register with the recognised late mark and will attend a detention after school on the same day. If any pupils fail to attend the detention they will be placed in the 'TIF' (Taught in school from 3.00p.m. until 6.00 p.m.) Parents of pupils who persistently arrive late for school will be asked to meet with the Head teacher and the Education Welfare officer to discuss the reasons for persistently arriving to school late. Pupils can be marked absent from school if they are persistently late.

WORKING TOGETHER

School recognises that from time to time disruptions can occur in family life and it is the schools policy to help and support our pupils as much as we can through difficult or challenging times. We ask all parents to talk with us about any circumstance that may have an affect upon their children's school attendance we will do all we can to offer advice or refer you to a relevant agency who may be able to assist you at that time. However the school has a legal responsibility to mark a school register twice a day and to report any pupil who has poor school attendance or punctuality to the relevant authority. By working together we can ensure that school meets the targets set for it by Local and National Government and that the whole school community will benefit from a good school attendance record.

Parents are asked to make medical and dental appointments outside school time wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, staff should be informed (in advance if at all possible). A “present” mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day.

School may ask parents of pupils who they feel are not achieving the level of school attendance expected of them to attend meetings to discuss this matter and this may include the Education Welfare officer or other member of the Local Authority. Parenting Contracts will be encouraged to promote attendance and punctuality and will form part of the strategy for attendance prior to referral to the Education Welfare service.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

The school attendance target set by the DCSF is **90.80%**.

School will reward all those pupils who achieve this level of attendance and give special praise to those pupils who manage a 100% attendance record. Those pupils who fail to meet the required attendance target will be encouraged and supported in every way to help them to strive to achieve the required level. Those pupils who fail to meet the required level but who have done all in their power to attend school regularly and on time will also be rewarded for their hard work and commitment.

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mr T Perry	Headteacher
Ms T Lilley	Assistant Headteacher
Mrs J Flavell	Home school Liaison
Mrs J Hadley	Registration and attendance
Mr M McManus	Education Welfare Officer

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 regularly and on time. School staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

October 2007
Review in Oct 2008

