



Attendance Policy

INTRODUCTION

Research shows that pupil achievement and life chances are linked to attendance. Poor attendees may not be able to keep up with school work or miss out on parts of the curriculum. This can affect their rate of progress and overall level of attainment. It is not only the academic work: missing out on the social side of school life can affect children's ability to make and keep friendships. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help children later on at secondary school. Being on time is also vital. Arriving late at school can be very disruptive for the late child, the teacher and other children in the class. Parents whose children are of compulsory school age (for our school those pupils who attend the term following their 5th birthday until the end of year 6) and school registered are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they are committing an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996 and may be served a penalty not prosecuted for the offence.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- · Attend school regularly
- · Attend school punctually
- · Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- · Discuss with their class teacher any problems preventing them from attending school

We expect all parents and carers to:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child(ren) arrive punctually by 8.50 a.m. and prepared for the school day
- Inform the school by 9.30am, at the very latest, on the first day of the child's absence
- Contact the school whenever any problems occur that may keep the child away from school



- Book family holidays during school holidays unless there is an exceptional circumstance
- For medical appointments please keep time away from school for the minimum amount of time possible.

We expect the school (staff and governors) to:

- Encourage good school attendance and provide a safe and welcoming learning environment
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and monitor all pupils' attendance
- Contact the parents or carers as soon as possible when there is unexplained or irregular absence
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) on one of their regular monitoring visits to the school, if not resolved with parents
- Work with the EWO if further action, such as a court prosecution, is required. (Fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment for each absent child)
- Keep parents informed about attendance issues and report termly to them on their child(rens) attendance record
- Keep to DCSF and LA (Local Authority) guidelines

Targets

The LA expect an average of at least 95% attendance of pupils. This allows for an average of 9½ days of authorised absence per child in each school year. This should cover all absence including sickness, medical appointments and authorised holiday absence. The LA is responsible for monitoring attendance through the EWOs. OfSTED will pay special attention to primary schools that have an overall attendance rate of less than 95%.



Encouraging Attendance

The school will ensure that parents are well-informed about attendance issues through:

- ✓ The parent information booklets and DCSF booklets
- ✓ Home-school agreement
- ✓ Letters to parents and general Newsletters
- ✓ Parent consultation evenings (as appropriate)
- ✓ End of Year School reports (more detail if concerns are evident)
- ✓ Governors annual report and meeting
- ✓ Prospectus/Web Site

The school will encourage good school attendance through a range of possible incentives such as:

- ❖ Attendance Cups - awarded to upper phase and lower phase weekly for highest attendance
- ❖ Weekly assembly with colourful bar chart display
- ❖ Termly individual attendance certificates for 100% attendance
- ❖ Half termly attendance prize to winning classes in upper and lower phase, for best attendance
- ❖ Yearly individual prize = awarded for 100% attendance
- ❖ Learning Mentor team to work with individual pupils (and families) - to give one-to-one support, advice, incentives, motivation to attend school.

HOLIDAYS

Parental or sibling illness is not an authorised reason for a pupil being kept off school. Similarly, medical requirements of other family members, such as anti natal scans are not authorized reasons for a pupil being kept off school.

Appendix 1 for school use clarifies the roles of staff in the recording and monitoring of attendance and lateness.



The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) checks attendance on a weekly visit.

The following information has been taken from "Pupil Support" guidelines from the DCSF:

- Parents should not normally take pupils on holidays in term time.
- Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking account of: the age of the child; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature and parental wishes; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress.
- If the school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday, absence is recorded as unauthorised
- If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised.
- Schools may delete from roll a pupil who fails to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness, and the school has been informed.
- Schools should only, exceptionally, agree absence of more than 10 school days in a school year (and parents should not regard 10 days as the norm)
- An annual holiday absence can only be regarded as a block and not as a culmination of odd days of "holiday" over the year.
- Treat days (i.e. birthdays, theme park visits) cannot be classed as authorised absence.

Procedures

The school recognizes the Local Authority position on holidays taken during term time. If holidays are taken absence will be marked as unauthorised. In exceptional circumstances the headteacher can take a decision to authorize the time.

The HT makes the decision re permission, and feedback given to parents or further explanations if requested.



PROSECUTION FOR IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE

The following is taken from the Education Act 1996 section 444(1).

If a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly the LA can prosecute a parent unless the parent can show that:

- The pupil was absent with leave agreed by school staff
- The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- The absence was on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs
- The school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the LA has made no suitable arrangements for the pupil's transport to and from school, boarding accommodation at or near the school or enabling the child to attend a school nearer their home

FIXED PENALTY NOTICE

Our school is committed to promoting the welfare of your child through regular school attendance. We know the overall progress in school. We are therefore fully committed to promoting school attendance by promoting an environment and ethos where children feel safe and can build positive relationships with their peers. Good attendance is rewarded through our attendance certificates. We expect that in return parents ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually and that holidays in term time are avoided.

In the event of a holiday taken in term time during a public examination, mock examination or SATS without the express agreement of the school, the Headteacher will notify the EWO. Attendance monitored at less than 80%, the level which is considered by the DCSF to be persistent absence, will be referred to the EWO. Penalty notices can be served to parents and non payment of these can lead to prosecution. An Education Supervision Plan may be put into place where prosecution is deemed not to be the appropriate course of action.



Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher Role

Consider requests for authorised absence in exceptional circumstances.
Give approval in advance in appropriate circumstances, taking account of the child's attendance record to date.
Authorise absence after it occurs when a satisfactory explanation is accepted.
Consider the use of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or lateness.
Complete HT witness statements on pupil absence for court use.

Deputy Headteacher Role

Oversee day to day attendance procedures.
Monitor pupil attendance and take action according to this policy.
Analyse trends in attendance data to identify appropriate action.
Investigate reasons for absence exploring any underlying cause either at home or in school.
Ensure action is taken in response to any difficulties reported and [e.g. bullying/behaviour].
Ensure that anti-bullying and behaviour policies are followed.
Work in partnership with parents to improve poor attendance.
Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals as necessary.
Work with the EWO towards improved patterns of attendance for referred pupils identifying the course of action that should be taken.
Make referrals to other agencies where appropriate.
Work with Class Teachers to agree and implement strategies to reengage pupils with emerging attendance problems.
Work with relevant staff to plan reintegration for pupils who have been absent for a period.
Compile and update standard letters re: % attendance, notification of reasons for absence, lateness. Manage incentives to encourage regular attendance.
Ensure data is accurate for the termly and annual DCSF attendance returns.

Class Teachers

Prepare and deliver stimulating and enjoyable work for all pupils.
Registration of pupils at the start of morning and afternoon sessions.
Alert the attendance secretary of any children who demonstrate an unsettled pattern of attendance or whose attendance pattern changes.
Return registers to the designated place immediately after registration.



Report percentage attendance at parent consultations; encourage regular punctual attendance; work to secure this
Ensure all absence notes are passed to the attendance officer via the class register folder.
Work with the DHT to agree and implement strategies to re-engage pupils with emerging attendance problems.

Attendance Administration Staff

Print weekly registers.
Record late arrival and reasons.
Ensure reasons for absences are accurately recorded.
Update records using agreed codes.
Make calls to parents when first day of absence contact has not been made by parents.
Prepare standard letters requesting reasons for absence when this is unexplained.
Prepare letters to inform parents when a child's attendance is giving cause for concern and is thus being monitored
Collect absence notes and record reasons for absence.
Meet with the DHT and take agreed action.
Provide attendance reports when requested.
Liaise with the EWO on attendance matters.
Complete the annual DCSF attendance returns.
Parents ensure their child attends daily and on time.
Keep the school fully informed on all matters that might affect attendance and their child in school.
Telephone school on the first day of any absence to inform school of the reason
Provide a note confirming the reason for absence on the child's return to school
If attendance becomes a problem - work with the school to improve matters.
Give serious consideration to whether it is appropriate or necessary to request term time absence.
Make application for any term time leave of absence prior to proposed dates.

Parent Support Advisers

Liaise with school attendance officer to ensure early referral and follow up of identified families
Informal meetings or coffee mornings - parents invited in to chat and work out what problems / issues they have which are leading absence
Induction sessions for parents of new pupils
Promote attendance and children being in school on time



Use information / data - software printouts of attendance to send to parents on a termly basis and use in individual interviews

Track class attendance weekly and monitor classes under 95%

Work with leaders, class teachers, pupils and parents to ensure class attendance is above 95%

Investigate and set up walking bus, targeting vulnerable families

Work to engage hard to reach families to ensure pupils attendance is above 95%

Education Welfare Officer

Work closely with school and families to resolve attendance issues.

Visit school for meetings at agreed times.

Identify, with school, cases of unauthorised absence which necessitate action and advise on responses.

Provide written reports to school in the form of consultation sheets.

Complete regular register checks.

On receipt of a written referral, take appropriate action, which may include:

- advice on strategies to improve attendance
- assessment home visits
- action planning
- agreed time-limited intervention
- attendance at school meetings
- written record of work undertaken
- verbal feedback where appropriate
- written response to referral within 10 days
- liaise with other agencies
- onward referral to other agencies
- liaison with other LEA departments
- preparation of cases for prosecution including sending warning letters