



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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Committee responsible	PPPD
Authorisation	Debbie Doherty

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Introduction:**

Regular attendance is an expectation of all of our pupils. We believe that children gain the greatest benefit from their education if they attend regularly. Whilst we recognize that certain absences are unavoidable, your child should attend school every day and be punctual. 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. 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:**

- Give you details on attendance in our regular school newsletter;
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance in assemblies focussing on class achievements in the first instance
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates and/or local authority reward initiatives

### **Understanding types of absence:**

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

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 which have not been agreed.

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.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 20% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level has a negative impact on 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 immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully with the support of the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO). PA pupils and their parents may be subject to an Action Plan to help improve overall attendance levels.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Continue to keep us informed of any subsequent absences by telephone. Alternatively, you can contact us in writing.
- Or, you can call into school and report the absence at reception or to the classteacher

#### **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 Headteacher if absences persist

- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance becomes a problem.

### **Extended periods of absence without notification:**

If your child is absent for a period of 2 weeks and you have not notified the school of the reason for this absence, your child will be deemed 'missing'. On the 10<sup>th</sup> day of absence, the school will contact Pupil Support Services at the Local Authority and/or the school's designated Education Welfare Officer who will, in turn, commence official procedures to locate your child's whereabouts.

### **The Education Welfare Officer:**

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. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the LA Education Welfare Officer. 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. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer 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 Education Authority.

### **Lateness:**

Good punctuality is equally important. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work as well as important information about the school day. Late arriving pupils can also disrupt lessons, which can, in turn, affect other pupils.

### **How we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. In KS1, the doors are open from 8.45am and children are welcome to come into class at this time.

Registers are marked as soon after 8.55 as possible. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.05 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 to discuss the matter, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Holidays/Absences during 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. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

- All applications for leave must be made in advance (forms are available from the office and the website) In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. The school will not authorise any family holidays during term time unless there are mitigating circumstances. This also applies to leave taken immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS).

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.

### **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.

The minimum expected level of attendance for this school is 95%

### **Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Bridgette Bishop – Administrator  
Debbie Doherty – Headteacher  
Anne Bowles-Orr - EWOs

### **Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures 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 the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

