



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

The foundation of all good learning is based upon a continuum of progression and this can only be fully realised with regular attendance and good time keeping. Pupils must be in school in order to learn. Pupils must be made aware that attendance, being on time, completing homework and contributing to the class are essential elements of preparation for future working lives. They will develop by sharing ideas and developing skills and knowledge by accessing teacher knowledge.

The school will promote a positive attitude towards these requirements and will work with pupils, parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service and other agencies in order to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality at all times.

Parents will be requested to take note of this policy document and work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance rates and attain the targets set out below. It is the intention of the Head Teacher to set a percentage increase for each following academic year in order to continue to raise pupil achievement.

### **2 OBJECTIVES**

The school will work proactively to ensure early identification and intervention in all matters concerning attendance. This will be achieved by the following:

- To establish an ethos of “school attendance matters”.
- To increase the involvement of all members of the school community and beyond.
- To develop a consistent approach both within school and with all external agencies.
- To provide a system of effective communication with parents/carers.
- To maintain pupil punctuality by regular monitoring of consistent offenders.

- To ensure that all registers are kept up to date, with authorised/unauthorised absences clearly noted, as required of a legal document.
- To ensure that parental condoned absences do not affect the school procedures – they are to be dealt with as unauthorised absences.
- To monitor attendance of those pupils "at risk" and follow up absences by visits from the Educational Welfare Officer.
- To send termly letters to parents when attendance is below 85% in order to inform of the impact of absence on educational attainment.
- To award a weekly certificate for class attendance.
- To achieve regular attendance of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds by encouraging parents to take long term home visits to relatives, during school holidays.
- To remind parents annually, that holidays for pupils during term time are not encouraged and must not exceed 10 days. A holiday form must be completed at least 2 weeks before the intended absence.
- To inform parents annually, that if their child is taken on an extended holiday, authorised absence must be obtained from the head teacher and a date given for return. Should the child NOT return within two weeks of this given date, the child's name will be removed from the register, and there is no guarantee of their child being readmitted to the school. If permission is not obtained from the head teacher, the child's name will be removed from the register after four weeks and the Education Welfare Officer will be informed of their absence from the first instance
- The Head Teacher will report each term on pupil attendance percentages for each class in the required Head Teacher's Report to Governors.

### **3 THE EDUCATION ACT 1996**

The Education Act 1996 states that parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 to 16 year olds) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the LA to ensure that parents meet these responsibilities. Attendance enforcement is usually carried out by the LA Education Welfare Service who provide an important link between schools and families. The school is required to inform the LA if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten days and the absence is treated as unauthorised. Heads can, of course, notify the LA earlier if there are areas of concern.

**4 PUPIL REGISTRATION**

The school is required to maintain two registers: -

- An admission register (known as the School Roll)
- An attendance register

The admission register shall contain a list of all pupils at the school.

The school ensures that an attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site, or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

**Authorised or Unauthorised Absence?**

**Authorised** absence is whether the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

All other absences must be treated as **unauthorised**.

**5 RESPONSIBILITIES**

Achieving good attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of the whole school community. We request that consideration is given to the following:

**Pupils**

- That all pupils understand that attendance is compulsory, unless illness causes absence.
- All pupils should try to attend all school lessons and most importantly – be on time.
- Any pupil having problems should seek support from home, school or both.

**Parents**

- Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Parents need to be aware that condoned, unauthorised absences have an extreme effect on the educational progress of their child.
- Parents need to be aware that 6 weeks absence – in any form – is equal to their child missing one term's work.
- Parents to inform the school office/class teachers why their child has been absent, either by note or verbally; failure to do so will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

- Parents to inform the school, by phone, on the first day of absence due to illness.
- Parents who have problems getting their child to attend school can seek the support of the school and/or the Education Welfare Service.

### **School**

- Through teaching, pastoral care and the celebration of attendance achievements, the school will promote the importance of good attendance at all times.
- Staff will complete registers accurately and in line with statutory guidelines.
- Staff will follow school procedures for tackling attendance problems.
- The school will work closely with pupils and families and offer support and guidance when and if required.

### **Education Welfare Service**

- The nominated officer, will support the school in dealing with problems relating to attendance as stated in the Service Level Agreement.

### **Additional Support**

- Parents may request support from the head teacher and/or the assistant head teachers

Services available are:  
Inclusion and Access  
Child Psychology  
Pupil Referral and Exclusions  
Social Services  
Medical

<b>6 SCHOOL PROCEDURES</b>
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- The school will record attendance for both the morning and afternoon sessions as required by statutory guidelines.
- All registers are given out before commencement of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Registration will be at 9.00 am and 1.15 pm.
- Pupils who are not present at these times will be marked late.
- Any child who arrives late in school must be sent to the school office for their mark.
- Registers will be collected and taken to the school office by 9.10 am and 1.25 pm.
- Registers will close 15 minutes after the start of the morning and afternoon session – any pupil arriving after this time will be regarded as taking an unauthorised absence.

- Late comers will be monitored weekly, in order to see any pattern of lateness by particular families. Parents will be notified in writing of commencement times and requested to endeavour to keep to these – they will be informed that lateness decreases their child's access time to the taught curriculum.
- The office manager keeps all registers during the school sessions, in case of fire.
- Any child, who is known to be absent, but not through illness, should be reported immediately to senior staff and the E.W.O. contacted to make a home visit if the matter has not been resolved and is continuing.
- Any pupils who give concern re. attendance must be seen by the relevant staff and discussion must take place in order to find the reasons for absence. If attendance does not improve, then the head teacher must make contact with the parents and relevant strategies applied.
- The head teacher must ensure that parents are made aware of their legal responsibilities; what counts as an authorised absence. This information is included in the School Prospectus.
- Any child who is absent from school must have their absence recorded as being authorised or unauthorised. Only the Head Teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.
- The Attendance Officer will call the family and check on reasons for absence. This information will then be recorded and, where necessary, passed on to the relevant professional.
- Medical and Dental appointments should, wherever possible, be made outside of school hours, or in school holidays. The School will discuss with the School Medical Officer and School Nurse those pupils who frequently miss days for medical reasons. Where necessary, a referral will be made to the school medical officer for an evaluation of the child's health and educational needs.

### **Procedures for leaving school premises during the school day**

- Any pupil leaving the premises must be accompanied by an adult known to the school
- The class teacher must ensure that the school office or senior staff have been notified by the adult.
- The pupil who leaves the premises must be signed out. (For safety in case of fire)
- Any parent making appointments for their child during the day, must be advised of loss of curriculum time and asked to make further appointments out of school time
- Pupils should inform the class teacher if they know they are to be absent for any session, with the reasons why.

**N.B. Parents are informed in the School Prospectus of the following requirements:**

- Known absences - school to be informed by letter, telephone or verbal communication.
- To contact school on the first day of absence due to illness.
- To send a note or verbal message on the child's return to school.
- To fill in holiday forms when required – *with the request that holidays should only be taken during term times if no other time is possible. Parents/carers will also be reminded that they DO NOT have the right to take pupils out of school without first seeking the permission of the school and its governing body.*

**Off site registration**

Pupils who attend residential centres for a period of education, will be recorded as present by the school.

<b>7 STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE</b>
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Legal requirement – Reporting termly Absence Returns via the Internet.

LA target setting for both authorised and unauthorised absences.

Monitoring of the attendance and achievement of vulnerable groups.

**School Strategies**

- Monitoring of registers for promoting and achieving effective practice by the designated person.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the school's reporting system aligned to poor attendance and the processes used for working with families who require support.
- Use of electronic registration data and scrutiny of associated information.
- Recording attendance on reports to parents with positive comments for effort.
- Teacher comments on reports re the effect of long term absences (if required using comparative data to establish the effect of extended holidays on attendance and achievement).
- Regular reminders to parents of their legal responsibilities.
- Regular contact with the Education Welfare Officer.

- Using attendance data for awards and the celebration of attendance as follows:
  - Termly individual attendance certificates for 100% attendance
  - Congratulating a child who has improved attendance
  - Welcoming pupils back after illness
  - Weekly class attendance award
- Notifying any new class teacher of a child "at risk", in order that they may monitor attendance.
- To keep in contact with the E.W.O. and together monitor all strategies used in the school.
- Review of the policy on a regular basis to ensure its effectiveness.

## **8 CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

All staff will receive relevant and appropriate training in order for them to be an effective part of the school attendance strategy.

The designated person will liaise with the person responsible for Continued Professional Development to provide an annual training schedule to meet the needs of the whole school community.

## **9 OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION AND SCHOOL POLICIES**

This document sets out the school's agenda for addressing issues related to attendance and punctuality.

The following school policies and procedures also impact on the effectiveness of this policy. The staff and governing body take the following into consideration when looking at identified attendance issues.

- Home School Agreement
- Special Educational Needs
- Behaviour
- Bullying
- Child Protection

## **10 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE TARGET**

The school target for attendance for the year 2007/2008 is 95%.

The staff will also monitor the need to set weekly targets for each class in order to achieve this challenging target.

