



ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy has been written to inform staff, governors and parents of the procedures to be followed regarding attendance. It follows the DfE regulations "The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006" and "The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013". Regular attendance is necessary for all pupils to gain maximum benefit from their educational opportunities. Children with poor attendance are much more likely to underachieve and often have more difficulties with social relationships. Thus it is in the children's interests to attend regularly and to be punctual.

Our target for attendance is 96%. We cannot achieve this unless all our pupils are attending regularly.

Reporting Absences

Responsibility for informing the school of the reason for their child's absence lies with parents. Parents should inform the school on the first day of absence whether in person or by telephone, leaving a message on the absence line, by 9.30 am on the first day of absence. The message should include the child's name, the nature of the illness and where possible the predicted date of return.

Telephone messages will be noted down on absence slips provided and put into the appropriate class register.

In accordance with good safeguarding practice, if a message is not received, the school bursar will phone parents to establish reason for absence.

Registration

Registration must take place at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Where no pupils go home for lunch a head count is considered satisfactory as a method of conducting registration for the beginning of the afternoon session. The register is left open until 30 minutes after school starts.

Parental Notes

Legally only the Headteacher can authorise absence. Parentally condoned unjustified absence will be classed as unauthorised.

If the school is unable to accept the explanation or explanation is not forthcoming, the absence must be treated as unauthorised. In the event of the latter, a letter will be issued by the school requesting an explanation for the absence – if an explanation is still not supplied the EWO [Educational Welfare Officer] will be contacted by the head teacher or school secretary and parents will be notified that this action has been taken. See below re: Penalty Notices

Illness, medical & dental appointments

If a child is prevented from attending school due to illness and the school is satisfied with the explanation the absence is treated as authorised. Time away from school for medical or dental appointments is authorised when confirmation is received from parents. We would encourage parents to make appointments after school or in the holidays where possible.

Lateness

Pupils are actively encouraged to attend school punctually. Arrival after close of registration without suitable explanation is classed as unauthorised absence. Persistent lateness is detrimental to the education and well being of the child who is late and is disruptive for the whole class. Initially the class teacher will contact the parent and if there is no improvement the E.W.O. will be contacted as above.

Attendance Monitoring

Attendance is monitored by class teachers, who will draw the attention of the Head Teacher to any unauthorised attendance or any pupils whose attendance falls below an acceptable level. In addition the Head Teacher regularly checks the registers and late book and the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer carries out termly checks. If any pupil's attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern the Head Teacher will send a letter and / or ask to speak to a parent. The purpose of the discussion is to find any obstacles or difficulties standing in the way of good attendance and to effect improvement. If improvement is not achieved the E.W.O will be consulted.

Leave of Absence

From 1st September 2013 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amends the 2006 Regulations and makes clear that Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The entitlement of parents being allowed to take 10 days holidays in term time has been removed.

Exceptional Circumstances

The Head Teacher or person designated by the Head Teacher will determine what are considered to be exceptional circumstances.

The following may be examples of exceptional circumstances:

- A request for leave of absence on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which parents belong.
- To allow a pupil to return to their country of origin for family, religious or cultural reasons.
- Unavoidable circumstances e.g. the parent/carer has inflexible leave allocation and this has been confirmed, in writing, by the employer.
- A family member is seriously ill.
- There has been a death or significant trauma in the family and a leave of absence is deemed appropriate.

Applying for leave of Absence

- Parents/carers will be required to complete a leave of absence request form available from the school office, or the school website and return it to school. Parents should state clearly the reasons why the absence cannot take place during school holidays.
- Parents/carers may be required to attend an interview with the Head Teacher to discuss their request for a leave of absence.

Parents/carers will normally be notified of the outcome of their application for a leave of absence within 10 school days of the date of the application. If the leave of absence is not agreed by the school, but the pupil is absent on the requested dates, the absence will be recorded as 'G'. This will mean that the absence has been recorded on the school attendance register as unauthorised and the Local Authority will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (Unauthorised Holiday) in accordance with section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Currently the penalty fine is £60 per parent for each child's absence.

14th January 2014

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