



ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

We **expect** all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make attendance at our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

SHARED LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY BETWEEN THE FOLLOWING:

Parents of children of compulsory school age **must** ensure that they receive full time education, either at school or otherwise.

Schools must keep an attendance register which is marked at the beginning of a.m. and p.m. sessions.

Schools should monitor attendance, to give permission for absence and to work with the parent and other LA based agencies to deal with any problems of poor or non-attendance.

L.A.'s must ensure that parents are fulfilling their statutory obligations and provide support for pupils, parents and schools.

DEFINITION OF ABSENCES

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent or guardian writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and guardians do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents or guardians will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent or guardian takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, it will not qualify as an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent or guardian. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent or guardian.

ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

Parents are expected to telephone the school to inform of the absence prior to the start of the school day.

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office.

The school office will endeavor to contact a parent or guardian in order to ascertain the reason for the absence.

If we have been unable to contact the parent or guardian, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence when the child returns to school.

A note (email) may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

LATENESS

Children arriving after the register has closed should be signed in by their parents or guardian at the school office, with reason given for their late arrival. It will then be up to the discretion of the Headteacher to decide if this goes down as an authorised absence. Repeated lateness will be followed up by the Headteacher.

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

With 13 weeks of school holidays a year, it is expected that all family holidays are taken during these periods. Term time is not an appropriate time to take children out of school save in exceptional circumstances. Parents do not have the right to take their children out of school for a family holiday.

Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the work they have missed. Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates. Children who have a poor attendance record usually have low attainment at the end of Year 2 and often this continues into Year 6. This is backed up nationally with evidence showing that children who have a poor attendance record usually do not achieve 5GCSE A*-C. These are key indicators of a child's future economic success and that is why all schools have been given stringent targets on attendance from the DFE.

Children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the best progress possible. The Headteacher is unable to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Leave to spend time with service personnel returning from active employment.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents', guardian's or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- Where inflexibility of the parents' or guardians' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production of the policy or written confirmation from the organisation/company.
- Where a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

You may be invited into school to discuss your request and provide supporting evidence. If the school refuses a request for term-time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

MANAGING ATTENDANCE

We expect parents to ensure:

- a) that children attend school regularly
- b) that children arrive at school in order to start promptly at 9.00am
- c) they notify the school on first day of any absence
- d) that they ask permission by letter for their children to miss school for any specific occasion in order absences to be approved
- e) they do not take their children away from school for holidays during term time

To support this we develop close links with parents through school talks which

emphasize the importance of regular attendance and good time keeping. We provide guidance in the School Handbook and through additional leaflets on 'Attendance'.

Teachers follow up unexplained absences and ask for written details.

Persistent lateness/absence is first discussed with individual parents followed by letter from the Head Teacher.

We would contact the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) to discuss attendance and raise any concerns with regard to any specific children.

Supporting County initiatives that raise awareness of attendance matters e.g. County certificates awarded to children who have good attendance record.

LONG TERM ABSENCE

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given tuition outside school.

RECORDING AND MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The register is a legal document and is a point of reference for the school's knowledge of any individual pupils whereabouts. Registers are taken using the SIMs management system.

Registers are taken at 8.55am and 1.15pm. Register closes at 9.00am and 1.20pm.

Class registers are the responsibility of the class teacher. There is guidance for marking ie absence codes in SIMs.

Late arrivals have to be recorded in a specific 'Late Book' and the child signed in by parent/guardian.

An Attendance record is reported to parents on end of year reports and also the number of late sessions.

Notification of a child's sickness is recorded in message book in the office.

Attendance is monitored on a half-termly basis. We follow-up by letter to the parents of children whose attendance is significantly below other children and where there is no genuine explanation.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Headteacher. The Headteacher has the responsibility for this policy and for ensuring that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and promote good attendance.