

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by PS&R Committee: Summer term 2017  
Date of next review: Summer term 2018

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### **Aims:**

*The agreed aims of this policy are to:*

- *Ensure pupils attend 'every day possible' so that they access full learning opportunities*
- *Ensure compliance with the parental duty stated under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 for making sure their child of compulsory school age receives full time education.*

*Poor attendance has been shown to impact on learning and attainment, not just in the current school, but throughout a child's education, leading to limited life choices. For our pupils to fulfil their potential we have a duty to encourage, support and enforce good attendance. Whilst we recognise the difficulties and challenges for some families in taking holidays outside of term time and as a school we seek creative solutions to work together with parents and carers, there is a duty on parents, carers and schools to ensure pupils access their full educational entitlement.*

### **The staff and Governors of our school believe that:**

- An effective attendance policy needs to be supported by parents and carers in partnership with school.
- Pupils who are working in a stimulating environment with exciting lessons, will want to attend school.
- Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities and make good progress.
- Establishing good patterns of attendance at an early age will support positive school attendance throughout school.
- Special consideration and support needs to be given to pupils where medical needs may impact on attendance.
- Poor attendance significantly impacts on learning and progress and therefore there needs to be a rigorous and consistent approach where parents and carers choose to go against school guidance and expectations.
- Poor attendance and punctuality can be an indication of safeguarding and welfare issues and may therefore require investigation.
- It is important to investigate where poor attendance/punctuality may be due to other issues such as bullying or anxiety.
- The Head Teacher retains the right to authorise holidays where there are extenuating or exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher may bring particular cases to the governing body for a joint decision.

### **We will recognise good attendance by:**

- Presenting certificates to all children who achieve 98% attendance and above and a star badge for those who achieve 100% each term in the end of term assembly. Absence due to medical appointments at hospital or with consultants will not be counted when determining the % attendance for awards, to ensure that these children are not discriminated against. Routine doctor, dentist and optician appointments should however be made outside school hours. School staff may request proof of hospital/consultant appointments in order to determine which category they fall into.
- Presenting trophies at the end of the academic year for those pupils who achieve 100% attendance.
- Publishing all of these awards in our school newsletters.

## **Monitoring attendance:**

- We monitor attendance through the completion of a twice daily register. Telephone calls will be made to parents and carers of absent pupils where the reason for absence is not known. Where there is a safeguarding concern, this is also passed on to the Head Teacher.
- Termly monitoring identifies those pupils with attendance at or above 98% for certificates and/or badges.
- Yearly monitoring will identify those pupils with 100% attendance who should receive a trophy.
- We monitor attendance half termly to identify any patterns or trends of absence over time and to identify those pupils whose attendance falls below 95% or who may be classed as having persistent absence (more than 5 unauthorised days in a six week rolling period)
- Lastly we monitor the attendance for vulnerable groups such as pupil premium children, SEN pupil and Looked after children on a monthly and termly basis.

*Where there are concerns about attendance this needs to be addressed speedily and rigorously to ensure the impact on learning is minimalised.*

## **Concerns in attendance may arise where:**

- Parents or carers take their children out of school in term time.
- Parents or carers take their children out of school at the start of a school term/academic year or during periods where there are assessments taking place in school.
- Pupils are absent on individual days whether explained or unexplained.
- There is an unexplained absence.
- Patterns of absence e.g. regular Mondays and Fridays.
- Medical needs or extenuating circumstances impact on attendance.

## **Holidays during term time:**

In line with government legislation, Head Teachers are unable to authorise leave for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Examples of these may be:

- A funeral for a member of their immediate family.
- Wedding of an immediate relative.
- Holidays which have to be taken in term time due to the circumstances of the child/family due to e.g. medical needs.

*Please note that this DOES NOT include parental employment leave or flight availability*

### **Penalty notices for holidays in term time:**

In line with Local Authority guidance, where holidays result in the child being absent for more than 3 days in a 6 week period, a referral to the Local Authority will be made for them to consider whether it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice.

### **Procedure for requesting leave during term time:**

Where parents or carers feel that there may be exceptional circumstances to justify holiday in term time, an application for leave during term time form should be completed (available from our website or the office). This form should be submitted directly to the office no later than 10 working days prior to the dates requested.

This request will then be considered on an individual basis and a letter sent out to the parents or carers giving the decision, which may be:

- Authorised due to exceptional circumstances
- Unauthorised, but is less than 3 days in a 6 week period and will therefore not result in any further action
- Unauthorised and as it will result in more than 3 days in a 6 week period, a request will be made to the LA as a result to consider issuing a penalty notice.

## **Persistent absence:**

Where the attendance of a pupil falls below 90% this is categorised as a persistent absence. This can lead to a penalty notice being issued where there are concerns about unauthorised absence or, in cases of illness, the legitimacy of the absence and, following support from school, attendance does not improve.

*N.B. Pupils with individual needs will be given particular consideration and support offered to minimalise impact on poor attendance.*

### **Enforcement:**

Where school has concerns about a child's attendance the following action will be taken:

- Teachers or another member of staff will speak to parents or carers about the concern and offer support. Issues which may lead to poor attendance e.g. bullying/anxiety will be investigated in line with school policies and support put in place.
- A letter will be written to parents and carers expressing concern and offering support.
- Parents and carers will be invited in to school to meet with members of the senior leadership team (SLT). The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the school's concerns and offer support. A letter will be sent out following this meeting, confirming the outcomes and informing the parents or carers that if attendance does not improve, that a request may be made to the Local Authority for a penalty fine to be issued.
- Where pupils under monitoring are absent, a telephone call will be made to the parents or carers to establish the reasons for the absence.
- Where pupils are not at school due to an unauthorised absence for 3 days, a letter will be sent to the parents stating that a further 2 days will result in a request for a penalty notice to be issued.
- Should the child not return, a letter confirming a request for a penalty notice will be sent to parents and carers.
- Where concerns have been shared with parents or carers and support has been offered but attendance continues to be a concern, then a request will be made to issue a penalty notice.

## **Roles and responsibilities:**

### **Role of Governors:**

- To adopt and approve a school attendance policy which enable the school to secure attendance which is at least in line with Government and Local Authority expectations.
- To promote the importance of good attendance throughout the school and local community.
- As Parent Governors, to uphold the agreed Attendance policy.
- To support the Head Teacher, where applicable, to make joint decisions.

### **Role of the Head Teacher:**

- To ensure that parents and carers are informed about the school attendance policy.
- To develop strategies to improve attendance.
- To communicate the importance of maximum attendance to parents and carers at every opportunity.
- To communicate to parents and carers the procedures for notifying school about pupil's absences.
- To ensure that letters are sent as stated in this policy by the Attendance Officer.
- To investigate absence where related to safeguarding or wellbeing concerns.
- Liaise with staff to work with families to improve pupil attendance.
- To enforce attendance procedures rigorously, including requesting for penalty notices to be issued where appropriate.
- To analyse attendance for vulnerable groups.

### **Role of the Attendance Officer (office staff):**

- To work with the Head Teacher to develop strategies to improve attendance - Bursar.
- To telephone parents or carers where there is unexplained absence, and record outcomes of conversations – Admin Assistant
- To monitor attendance daily for pupils of concern and record details - Admin Assistant
- To inform the Head Teacher should pupil with safeguarding issues is absent from school – AC/LG
- To refer to the Class Teacher, SENCo or Head Teacher where absence may be due to medical needs or a welfare issue – Admin Assistant
- To update the attendance spreadsheet and remind the Head Teacher about those pupils for whom there are concerns - Admin Assistant
- To provide Class Teacher's with summaries of pupil's attendance prior to Parents' evenings - Admin Assistant
- To deal with requests for leave in term time in the same week that they are received - Admin Assistant
- To send letters in line with this policy - Admin Assistant
- To analyse patterns in pupil attendance - Admin Assistant

**Role of Class Teachers:**

- To complete the class register on time, fully and accurately at the beginning of each school session.
- To make it clear to their pupils that they value maximum attendance.
- To encourage punctual arrival at school.
- To be alert to emerging patterns of authorised absence and speak to parents or carers where there are any concerns.
- Investigate where absence may be due to issues affecting pupil welfare – bully/anxiety/home circumstances and put support in place.
- Refer any concerns to the SENCo or Head Teacher (as appropriate).
- To the Head Teacher immediately if a child on a protection plan is absent, or if there are any concerns whatsoever about the whereabouts of a child.
- To discuss attendance of below 90% with parents or carers.

**Role of parents or carers:**

- To support the school policy by ensuring that their child attends school on time on **every day possible**.
- To inform school of the reason for their child's absence from school, on the first day, either by phone, through ParentMail, email or letter.
- To take holidays outside of term time.
- To inform the school of circumstances which may affect their child's attendance so that support can be offered.
- To arrange dental and medical appointments out of school hours wherever possible.

**Role of pupils:**

- To arrive at school by 8.50am for registration no later than 9am.
- To report to the school office if late (after registrations have been completed by the Class Teacher).
- To attend school on every possible day.

This policy has been agreed by staff and governors and will be reviewed annually.