



TOGETHER WE GROW AND LEARN

# Attendance Policy

**Date approved: - Spring 2016**

**Date to be reviewed: - Spring 2018**

**Governing Body Committee: - Strategic Development and Pupils Committee (SDPC)**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 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 our children to attend school regularly, and put in place appropriate procedures when families find it difficult to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we constantly strive to promote the values of our school to make it a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We reward those children whose attendance is very good and we also make the best provision we can for those children whose attendance falls below expectations.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, and its subsequent amendments, 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 also indicates whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## **2 Definitions**

### **2.1 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 writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

### **2.2 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.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## **3 If a child is absent**

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian. However, parents are encouraged to contact the school as soon as they know their child will be absent.
- 3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- 3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

- 3.5 If a child has an unexplained absence from school for more than two days **and** they are subject to a Child Protection plan then the Social Worker leading the plan must be contacted on the third day of absence. If there are any concerns regarding the child's whereabouts or safety then the Social Worker or MASH team should be contacted immediately.
- 3.6 **Any** child who has an unexplained absence from school of more than 10 consecutive days will be referred to the Missing Children department of the Local Authority.

#### **4 Requests for 'Withdrawal from Learning' (See Appendix 1)**

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, including absence for the purpose of a family holiday, unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. However, we understand that on rare occasions, there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request a leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. All requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances will be considered on their own merit. We expect parents to make their requests for consideration to the Head Teacher at least four weeks in advance unless there is adequate reason not to do so.
- 4.2 When making requests for 'withdrawal from learning' for exceptional circumstances, we ask parents to take into consideration the adverse effects of pupils' absence in term time on progress and attainment
- 4.3 No absences will be authorised during the first three weeks of each term, and during May, when many important assessments are being made. We would urge all parents to keep any absences during these times to an absolute minimum.

#### **5 Long-term absence**

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the appropriate support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

#### **6 Repeated unauthorised absences**

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be given a number of options to resolve the absences and to make improvements in attendance.
- 6.2 We understand that unauthorised absences may be due to various and complex situations for which extra help and support may be required. As each circumstance is different, the school will do all that it can to help implement an appropriate way forward. This could include an invitation to come into school to discuss the problem with either the child's Class Teacher or the Head Teacher.

## 7 Persistent Absence

7.1 As soon as a child falls into the category of Persistent Absence, with an attendance figure of less than 90%, a more thorough cycle of monitoring is initiated.

7.2 This monitoring includes:

- Regular communication with parents in person, or through letters and texts to offer help and support.
- Regular updates on current attendance figures and progress towards improving attendance.
- Praise and recognition when improvements are made or when high levels of attendance are maintained.
- Formal letters and meetings to emphasize the importance of good attendance and request evidence for absences.
- Referral to Family Services

7.3 The governors/Head Teacher, supported by the Local Authority, 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.

## 8 Rewards for good attendance

8.1 Good attendance is discussed regularly in the school during assemblies and within individual classes.

8.2 Some of our attendance rewards include:

- **Each week**, pupils in the class with the **highest attendance** are awarded a Value point and an attendance sticker. The class get to keep Ginger Bear in their classroom for the week.
- **Each week**, all pupils who have had **100% attendance** during the previous week are put into a raffle to win a place on our weekly BOPs Awards event.
- **Every half term**, pupils in the class with the **highest attendance** get to choose their own special treat out of our treasure chest.
- **Every term**, pupils who meet the attendance target are invited to an activity event after school, and those with the **highest attendance** are also invited to stay overnight at an Attendance Camp.
- **Every year**, pupils who achieve **100% attendance** are presented with a gift card and a special 100% attendance certificate or trophy.

## 9 Late Attendance

9.1 Being on time encourages the aspiration of children to greater opportunities by; getting the day off to a good start, making the most of their learning, inspiring a positive frame of mind, helping them to make and maintain friendships and creating a greater feeling of success and self-confidence.

- 9.2 The school day starts at 8-50am. Pupils arriving after this time are deemed a late attender. Pupils arriving after registers are taken are given a late mark in the register. Where possible, parents are asked to report to the office and provide a reason for the late attendance.
- 9.3 Persistent late attendance is monitored by our Attendance Officer and parents are contacted when it is felt improvements could be made. The school endeavours to do all it can to support families to get their children in to school on time.

## **10 Attendance targets**

- 10.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

## **11 Monitoring and review**

- 11.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they request an annual report from the Head Teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 11.2 The school keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 11.3 The rates of attendance are reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.
- 11.4 An Attendance Team comprising of the Deputy Head Teacher, the person in charge of administrative support for attendance and the Student and Family Support Lead meet half termly to monitor and review attendance and lateness.
- 11.5 The team work alongside Class Teachers to be responsible for monitoring attendance and for following up absences in the appropriate way. Class Teachers are responsible for reporting any concerns about a child's absence or persistent lateness to the team immediately.
- 11.6 This policy is reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.



**Appendix 1: REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING – TERM TIME ABSENCE**

|   |  |                           |  |
|---|--|---------------------------|--|
| Pupil's Name:   |  | Class:                    |  |
| Home Address:   |  |                           |  |
| I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:   |  |                           |  |
| Date of last day at school:   |  | Date of return to school: |  |
| Total number of days missed:  |  |                           |  |
| Please explain the exceptional circumstances that make it necessary for your child to be absent during term time:   |  |                           |  |
| You may enclose documents, such as official letters or special invitations, to support your request.  |  |                           |  |
| I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a penalty notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance. |  |                           |  |
| Name of Parent/Carer making the application:  |  |                           |  |
| Signed:   |  | Date:                     |  |

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE

For School Use:

|                      |  |                          |  |
|----------------------|--|--------------------------|--|
| Has been authorised: |  | Has not been authorised: |  |
| Reason:              |  |                          |  |
| Signed:              |  | Date:                    |  |