



Attendance Policy

As agreed by the full Governing Body on 6th May 2004 and revised in the light of new LEA Guidance May 2006

To be reviewed annually

This policy has been formulated by using the LEA model Attendance Policy provided by the Education Welfare Service

Principles

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognized appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The behaviour and attendance policy must include procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent / child or have general concerns about the absence to the Educational Welfare Service.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- ⇒ Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- ⇒ Truancy before or during the school day
- ⇒ Absences which have never been properly explained
- ⇒ Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact school at an early stage and work together with staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/ or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Procedures

Our school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- ⇒ Parents are encouraged to notify the main school office on the first day of absence and a code of absence is allocated
- ⇒ On the child's return to school a letter should be sent to school.
- ⇒ Teachers will complete the correct authorised absence code on receipt of a letter once the child returns to school
- ⇒ Parents can apply for up to 10 school days for annual family holiday. This is by completing the appropriate form available from the main school office. Once completed forms are returned to class teachers. (See Appendix 1)
- ⇒ Families undertaking extended visits overseas may enter into a '**Home – School Agreement**' with the Headteacher. Such leave is granted in accordance with the guidance from Staffordshire Education Authority's School Effectiveness / Social Inclusion Unit
- ⇒ Children who arrive after registration are required to report to the school office on each site and the office staff will alter the registers appropriately

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 85% in any term without good reason, a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444. (See Appendix 2)

It is not appropriate for the school to authorize absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects in line with our school's **Social Inclusion Policy**

- ⇒ Raising the attendance of pupils with below 90% attendance
- ⇒ Consider how to target and address lateness of pupils

Additionally all pupils who achieve 100% attendance during the academic year receive a certificate of achievement

Staff responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

- ⇒ Headteacher
- ⇒ Classteachers
- ⇒ Clerical Assistant in the main school office with responsibility for the SIMS register system

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its attendance figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.