

# Attendance Policy



## RATIONALE

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential components of a child's education. In order to make the most of the learning opportunities provided within school, children need to have the continuity of provision which consistent attendance allows.

The measures outlined in this policy are designed to ensure children miss as little school as possible. All absences are monitored regularly by the Headteacher. Where there are any concerns, the school will contact families to make an appointment to discuss further strategies to support an improvement in the child's attendance.

## AIMS

- To encourage prompt arrival at school
- To encourage regular attendance
- To ensure that routines are in place for monitoring attendance and for early identification of any difficulties
- To respect and appreciate that variation in lifestyle and religious background may place different demands upon children and their families
- For all school staff to take an active role in promoting the importance of good attendance

## SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if the school has not been contacted by 9.30am on the first day of absence.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.

## STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality by:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/guardians
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns

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- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation (from either the parents or the School Office)
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings
- Setting an exemplary example by being punctual and having good attendance themselves

## PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education (section 36, 1944 Education Act). Therefore, parents must ensure that their children are in school every day, on time with everything they need to take part in the day's activities. In order for children to be prepared for the school day, they should have reading books, completed homework and PE kits.

Parents/carers should:

- Have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day at 8.45 am. Registers close at 9.00am.
- Collect children from school promptly at 3.00pm unless their child is attending an after-school activity. If parents/carers are unable to collect children on time, they should contact the school and let them know. **Persistent late collection will result in parents/carers meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the matter.**
- Inform the school on each day your child is absent before 9.30am.
- Send in a letter explaining absence when your child returns to school.
- Comply with attendance information regarding holidays and lateness
- Work with the school to improve lateness and attendance, including attending any meetings set by the school to discuss attendance issues.

## THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The School Office will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss weekly with the Headteacher. On the first day of absence, if no contact has been made by 9.30am, the school office will try to contact parents/carers. If contact cannot be made, the School will conduct a home visit. If no contact can still be made, a letter will be left requesting that the parents/carers contact the school as soon as possible to arrange a meeting. Home visits will continue on a daily basis until contact from the parents is made and/or the child returns to school.

Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

- **Stage 1:** Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with home and or a home visit.
- **Stage 2:** If the concerns persist the school will make contact with the parent/carer via letter and or a home visit.
- **Stage 3:** If the concerns persist the school will contact the parents/carers in to arrange a meeting between the parent/carer and the Headteacher. Regular meetings will be held with the parent/carer until there is an improvement in the child's attendance/punctuality.
- **Stage 4:** If concerns still persist the school will make a formal referral to the EIPT team (Education Inclusion Partnership Team) to deal with the on-going issues.

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Should concerns persist the EIPT team will meet with the parents/carers. Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action which could result in fines and or prosecution.

## HOLIDAYS

New Government regulations state '**parents are no longer permitted to take their children out of school during term time for a holiday**. A leave of absence may be granted by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances'. Anyone requiring a leave of absence during term time must make an appointment with the Headteacher to discuss this. The Headteacher will also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Each request for a leave of absence is judged on a case by case basis and is viewed in line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy.

Holidays taken without the consent of the Headteacher will be marked as unauthorised and this in turn will affect your child's attendance percentage and could lead to the involvement of the Education Entitlement Service, which in turn, could lead to possible fines and or prosecution. More information can be found on the County Council website.

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/EducationandLearning/Parents/Attend/Pages/truancy.aspx>

Leave of absence will not be authorised if your child's attendance percentage is below 95%. Leave of absence will not be granted during the month of September for any child, the month of May for Year 6 and Year 2, and the month of June for Year 1.

## LATENESS

Children must be in class by 8.45am each day. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after 9.00am and will receive an unauthorised absence mark if arriving at school after 9.15am. The school gates will be locked promptly at 9.00am and children who arrive after this must enter the school, with a parent and be signed in at the school office, giving a reason as to why the child is late. Lateness will be monitored and the Headteacher will follow up on any unusual or persistent lateness. If a child is persistently late, the parent/carer will be asked to attend regular meetings until the child's attendance or timekeeping improves. If there is no improvement the parents/carers will be reported to the EIPT team.

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted by law. These are known as "**UNAUTHORISED** absences" and will be marked in the register as unauthorised. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Sleeping in
- Waiting on a delivery
- Snow, unless the school makes the decision to close the school
- One or more of your other children are sick
- Going shopping or for a haircut/new shoes etc.
- Going for a family day out
- Because it is your child's birthday

Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

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Please note that if you are sick, you must make other arrangements to get your child/children to school.

### **SICKNESS**

- Please notify the school on the first day of the illness and give the school an indication when you expect your child to return. If your child is not fit enough to return on the expected date please let the school know as soon as possible.
- Please send a note when the child returns to school.
- We will request a doctor's/dentist/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- Unless the illness is an emergency, routine doctor, dentist, optician appointments etc. are to be made for outside school hours.

We will support families of children with chronic medical conditions and children who are unable to attend due to hospitalisation by liaising with the hospital education team and/or providing work that can be completed at home. However being unable to attend school for whatever reason will still be marked as absent. This is the law and is unavoidable, but we will support both the child and family in any way that we can.

