



## Attendance and Truancy

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the school ethos, enables consistency and quality across the school and is related to the following legislation:

We believe this policy relates to the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Advice on School Attendance (DfE)
- Improving Attendance at School (DfE)
- School attendance parental responsibility measures: Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police (DfE)

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should aim to attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all Pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. **As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.**

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.



We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School personnel have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

We believe truancy is a matter that we treat very seriously as we feel pupils are not only losing valuable learning time but they are putting themselves at serious risk as the school and their parents are not aware of their whereabouts.

We have a duty to ensure that all parents are aware of our 'legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders or penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school.' Parents have a duty to ensure their children are well behaved and attend school regularly as 'good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects'.

We are aware that 'parenting contracts, orders and penalty notices for irregular attendance apply only to pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school' but they can also be applied for misbehaviour by pupils outside compulsory school age such as sixth form pupils or pupils at a maintained nursery. While 'penalty notices for parents of pupils found in a public place during school hours after being excluded also apply only to children of compulsory school age who are registered at a school.'

We believe it is essential to have a strong working relationship with the Education Welfare Service which provides support for pupils and their families in order promote good pupil attendance and to reduce truancy.

We are aware that leave of absence can only be granted to a pupil only in exceptional circumstances and in authorising a holiday in term time we will take into account the child's



attendance record, the child's age, the reason for the trip, the time in the academic year and the employment difficulties that parents face by taking holidays in school holiday time.

We will exercise a consistent approach and ensure equity for all pupils.

We aim to be judged at least good in all school inspections by ensuring that standards for all pupils are higher than schools of a similar size and that standards continue to improve faster than the national trend. We believe we will achieve this by having in place a home-school agreement that all parents have signed up to and by improving pupil attendance and truancy.

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

## **Aims**

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To have in place procedures to prevent truancy.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

## **Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure**

## **Role of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body will:

- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- promote the importance of attendance and punctuality with all stakeholders;



- ensure compliance with all statutory pupil registration regulations;
- ensure the Receptionist identifies and follows up all absence and lateness;
- ensure that the attendance policy is carried out;
- set statutory attendance targets for the year that are realistic and challenging in order to raise school attendance;
- ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
- monitor termly progress towards these targets by considering the following questions:
  - Has attendance improved?
  - Has punctuality improved?
  - Has parental response to absences improved?
  
- ensure the Headteacher exercises his/her discretionary power to authorise absence in extenuating circumstances for up to 10 days in an academic year between September and July which may include term time holidays;
- ensure the Headteacher does not authorise absence if it is to the detriment of a child's education;
- responsibility for ensuring that the school complies with all equalities legislation;
- nominated a designated Equalities governor to ensure that appropriate action will be taken to deal with all prejudice related incidents or incidents which are a breach of this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring funding is in place to support this policy;
- responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;
- the responsibility of involving the School Council in:
  - determining this policy with the Governing Body;
  - discussing improvements to this policy during the school year;
  - organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all pupils;
  - reviewing the effectiveness of this policy with the Governing Body
  
- make effective use of relevant research and information to improve this policy;
- nominate a link governor to:
  - visit the school regularly;
  - work closely with the Head of Care and Safeguarding and Receptionist;
  - ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
  - ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
  - attend training related to this policy;



- report to the Governing Body every term;
  - annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.
- responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

## Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- work with the School Council to develop this policy;
- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- create a culture which encourages attendance;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure school personnel are fully trained in the registration process and with the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- ensure pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- question any parental explanation for pupil absence if there is doubt as to the validity of the explanation;
- expect an explanation for every absence and if one is not forthcoming then the absence will be categorised as unauthorised;
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- meet with parents if they have applied for a holiday during school time;
- ensure school personnel are aware that unauthorised absence is absence without approval from the Headteacher and includes all unexplained absences;
- when considering an application for term time holiday request will consider the:
  - time of year of the proposed trip
  - length and purpose of the holiday
  - impact on continuity of learning
  - circumstances of the family
  - overall attendance of the child
  - wishes of the parents
- apply a consistent approach across the school and ensure equity for all pupils;
- promote the importance of attendance during collective worship;



- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- introduce rewards and incentives to encourage punctuality;
- organise home tuition with the local support services for pupils with long term illness provided they are well enough to undertake the work;
- adopt procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees;
- organise training for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;
- improve teaching in order to improve pupil engagement;
- recommend to the Governing Body the use of a parenting contract:
  - in cases of truancy/poor attendance;
  - when a pupil has consistently misbehaved or has been permanently excluded or excluded for a fixed period;
  - when it is considered that parenting is a factor in the truancy or bad behaviour of a child and where the parent appears to be in need of support.
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff especially on bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:
  - monitoring trends and patterns as highlighted in attendance data
  - achieving results above the national average
  - looking at results from parent, pupil and school personnel questionnaires
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

## **Role of the Head of Care and Safeguarding**

The Head of Care and Safeguarding will:

- address all school based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism etc;
- undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance via the Receptionist by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals, special educational needs and persistent absentees;



- monitor trends by using data effectively to help strategic planning;
- ensure early intervention in order to prevent absenteeism or truancy and to put in to effect a range of procedures to deal with this problem;
- send to parents at the end of each week an attendance report on their child;
- ensure that 'welfare checks' are carried out If no response is received after three days unauthorised absence. If there are safeguarding concerns contact will be made with the family as soon as possible
- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- agenda attendance and truancy at periodic meetings with school personnel;
- work closely with the Education Welfare Service;
- attend termly meetings with the EWO;
- report to the Governing Body every term attendance figures and progress to achieving set targets;
- work closely with the link governor and Receptionist;
- strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families.

## Role of the Receptionist

The Receptionist is responsible for:

- implementing the policy with the Headteacher and Head of Care and Safeguarding;
- contacting parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 10.00a.m.;
- continuing to contact the parents throughout the day until contact is made;
- contacting the key worker if a child is on the child protection register and no reason has been given for the child's absence;
- monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
- keeping the Head of Care and Safeguarding informed of attendance figures and trends;
- contacting parents regarding concerns about their child's attendance;
- organising meetings between the Head of Care and Safeguarding and parents to discuss their child's poor attendance;
- organising meetings between the Head of Care and Safeguarding and parents to discuss their child's truancy;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their application for a term time holiday;
- compiling attendance data reports for the Head of Care and Safeguarding, the Governing Body and the EWO;
- ensuring registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date;



- ensure attendance information is accurately recorded on CPOMS each day.

## **Role of the Education Welfare Service**

The Education Welfare Service will:

- appoint education welfare officers (EWO) who will promote good attendance in schools;
- establish effective working relationships with schools, pupils and parents to ensure educational entitlement and regular attendance;
- ensure pupils attend school regularly;
- investigate reasons for a pupil's poor attendance;
- provide support and counselling for children and their families;
- work with local agencies providing education, health and social services for pupils with specific needs;
- work with disaffected pupils;
- work with pupils who may be excluded;
- find alternative educational provision for excluded pupils;
- support schools at EHAT meetings;
- undertake truancy watch patrols with the local police.

## **Role of Class-based staff**

Class-based staff will:

- comply with and implement this policy;
- be aware of all other linked policies;
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- ensure registers are up to date;
- contact home on each day of absence to inform parents/carers about the learning that has been missed by absence and the timetable of activities for the following day;
- welcome the pupil back to school following absence and check the reason given by the pupil matches the information received by the Receptionist
- accurately record attendance information on CPOMS and identify if follow-up action is needed and by whom;
- Place an attendance sticker in a pupil's diary at the end of each week;





- be responsible for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality by monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- inform the Receptionist of any concerns about attendance or suspected truancy;
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance with pupils and parents;
- discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations.

## Role of Parents/carers

Parents/carers will:

- comply with this policy;
- work as partners with the school in the education of their children;
- ensure their children of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education;
- ensure their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- inform the school on the first day of absence;
- inform the school of any changes to their contact details;
- collect their children on time
- take part in periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- avoid booking family holidays in term time;
- be aware that the Headteacher when considering an application for a term time holiday request will consider the:
  - time of year of the proposed trip
  - length and purpose of the holiday
  - impact on continuity of learning
  - circumstances of the family
  - overall attendance of the child
  - wishes of the parents
- be aware that where parents fail to seek permission for time off then the absence will be treated as unauthorised;
- be aware that it is not advisable to apply for a term time holiday during the first six weeks of any academic year
- be encouraged to take an active interest in their child's work and to take an active role in the life of the school by attending:
  - parents and open evenings



- Festival of Learning weeks
- parent-teacher consultations
- class assemblies
- school concerts
- fundraising and social events

- encourage effort and achievement;
- encourage completion of homework and return it to school;
- provide the right conditions for homework to take place;
- expect their child to hand in homework on time;
- join the school in celebrating success of their child's learning;
- supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school.

## Role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority may prosecute a parent for not ensuring their child attends school regularly or may issue or apply for:

- Penalty Notice
- Education Supervision Order
- Parenting Order
- School Attendance Order

The Local Authority should:

- provide training on the understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes;
- analyse attendance patterns in order to improve pupil attendance especially those from vulnerable groups;
- make schools more aware of national priorities, initiatives and available grants in order to improve pupil attendance;
- try to identify why there is a variation in the use of attendance codes between schools;
- share good practice within the Local Authority and should identify and explore good practice in other Local Authorities.



## Role of Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- being aware of the school attendance and truancy policy;
- knowing the value of good attendance;
- knowing the seriousness of truancy, attending classes during the school day and not playing truant;
- returning to school after a period of illness;
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;
- liaise with the school council;
- take part in questionnaires and surveys.

## Dealing with Persistent Absence

Pupils are defined as persistent absentees by the Department for Education (DFE) if their attendance falls below 90%. This is for any absence whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects Schools to intervene well before pupils reach a level of persistent absence.

Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a student is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning. Pupils who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day of lessons per week or approximately 118 lessons per year

The DFE has published a strong link between poor school attendance and low levels of achievement:



Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting your child to have any absence without a good reason from school is an offence in law (The Education Act 1996) and may result in legal action.

### Dealing with Trends in Attendance

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- An 'Initial Contact' letter will be sent home when a child's attendance falls below 97%.
- An 'At Risk of Persistent Absence' letter will be sent home when a child's attendance falls below 93%
- A 'Persistent Absence' letter will be sent home when a child's attendance falls below 90%. The school's Family Advisor will make telephone contact to offer support.
- A 'Medical Evidence' letter will be sent home when a child has an attendance below 90% and absences on the grounds of ill health continue.
- If a child remains Persistently Absent, parents will be invited to attend an informal meeting with the Head of Care and Safeguarding, Family Advisor and EWO to explain their child's repeated absence.
- Support will be given if there are underlying reasons for the absence.
- If not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement.
- If there is no improvement then the EWO will take the appropriate action.

### Dealing with Lateness

The Receptionist will monitor lateness and inform:

- the Head of Care and Safeguarding of patterns of lateness;
- parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed

### Dealing with Truancy

If a pupil is thought to be playing truant then the school will immediately inform:

- the police
- the parent/carer;



All truants will receive:

- sanctions;
- support;
- discussions with the EWO to understand the seriousness of the matter; ▪ a programme of monitoring and support

The Police must be informed immediately if a pupil leaves school without prior permission.

## Absence

**Holidays during term time** – term time holidays will not be authorised

**Time off for exceptional circumstances** - parent are asked to complete a term time absence form requesting permission to take their child out of school during term time.

**Religious Observance** – a maximum of three days absence is allowed for religious observance.

**Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments** – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education.

## Removal from Roll

From the 1st September 2016 changes were introduced to the Pupil Registration Regulations 2016. These amendments affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year.

**As a school we are now required to:**

- Inform the LA in **every** circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school.

If your child is leaving our school parents are asked to:

- Give the attendance officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date



of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.

- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a

*child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

## Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the School Handbook/Prospectus
- the school website
- meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
- school events
- meetings with school personnel
- communications with home such as the Headteacher's weekly newsletter

## Training

All school personnel:

- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion
- receive training on this policy on induction which specifically covers:
  - the importance of good attendance and punctuality
  - all aspects of this policy
  - the use and understanding of attendance codes
  - authorised and unauthorised attendance
  - looking at trends and patterns
  - bullying
  - the needs of vulnerable groups



- receive periodic training so that they are kept up to date with new information
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

### **Monitoring the Implementation and Effectiveness of the Policy**

The practical application of this policy will be reviewed annually or when the need arises by the coordinator, the Headteacher and the nominated governor.

A statement of the policy's effectiveness and the necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.