



## **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is defined as the participation in a programme of educational activities arranged by the school, which might include an off-site provision.

Children are required to attend school regularly to benefit from the education we provide. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in school.

A child's attendance record will follow them throughout their statutory education. Excellent attendance is the key to ensuring that children have the best life chances and opportunities. We strongly believe that receiving a good education will help our children achieve the best possible outcomes, now and in their future.

### **The government expects us to:**

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (below 90%);
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

### **Why attendance is important.**

- Statistics show a link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Children who attend regularly find school routines, school work and friendships easier to manage.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school - secondary school.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers

### **Persistent absence**

Persistent absence according to 'The Department for Education' is **90%** or below.

Our school Education Welfare Officer (EWO) along with the school Pastoral Team will meet regularly to identify children below 90% and discuss possible support.

Each day of absence during the year will lower a pupil's attendance by over 0.5%.

One week of absence will lower a pupil's overall attendance by 2.6%.

The national attendance figure is over 97%. We have to aim to be at or above that.

## **School attendance and safeguarding**

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility, which is why we take it so seriously. Children who are missing education are at greater risk than those who attend regularly.

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. That is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

### **Attendance is everyone's responsibility.**

#### **Parents/Carers will:**

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
- Notify school on the first day of absence.
- Supply medical evidence when required.
- Ensure all contact details are up to date.
- Provide school with two emergency contact details.

#### **School Staff will:**

- Complete the register at the start of each session (morning and afternoon).
- Monitor daily patterns of attendance and punctuality.
- Make parents aware of concerns over irregular attendance.
- Input attendance data onto the system.
- Make first day absence calls and record reasons for absence Take actions where concerns have been identified.
- Inform Governors of attendance records.
- Inform parents of individual pupil's attendance records.
- Meet with parents whose children's attendance causes concern Request medical evidence if deemed necessary.
- Make referrals to the Education Welfare Officer.

#### **Education Welfare Officer will:**

- Request Penalty Notices to be issued for unauthorised leave in term time.
- Request Penalty Notices for regular lateness.
- Support school in achieving its targets and addressing concerns.
- Support families in ensuring their child/children attend school regularly.
- Prepare and facilitate school attendance meetings for irregular attendance including punctuality.
- Contact the parent/carer by phone, letter or home visit to discuss the schools concerns and how attendance and punctuality can be improved.
- Quality assure Penalty Notice requests for unauthorised absence.
- Implement legal proceedings.

#### **The Governing Board will:**

- Monitor whole school attendance termly and take appropriate action should it affect standards.
- Nominate a named Governor for Attendance.

## **Authorised absence**

Absence during term time for whatever reason interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in school.

There is a clear link between high attendance and good progress.

In general, those with the lowest attendance make the least progress. We actively discourage parents from arranging absence during term time and therefore will only authorise absence for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness – if contacted on the morning of the absence.
- Medical or dental appointment (routine appointments should be arranged out of school time).
- Approved leave in term time where there are **exceptional circumstances**, as agreed by the Head Teacher.

## **Unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absence is defined as absence in term time where permission has **not** been given by the school in accordance with the Attendance Policy. If we have not authorised absence, it means that parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school during term time. Absence will be marked as unauthorised if the conditions talked about in the authorised absence section are not met, or if:

- Pupils are late after the registers have closed (see the Lateness section).
- The absence is unexplained - no effort is made to contact the school to explain an absence.
- Any child whose absence is on-going and remains unexplained for an extended period will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education (CME).
- Pupils take the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment.
- We will not authorise any absence if:
  - The period of absence coincides with the start of term
  - The period of absence coincides with tests, SATs, exams or other significant events in the school calendar.

Even in exceptional circumstances, we will not authorise absence of over 1 day if: A child's attendance record over the previous 20-week period is less than 90% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness.

If absence is authorised, it will normally be for one period in any one school year (up to a maximum of ten days). If absence is not authorised and leave is taken anyway, it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence and the matter may be referred to the school's Education Welfare Officer. Unauthorised absence of over 8 sessions (4 days) in any 10-week period could lead to a fine being imposed and legal action taken. Parents/carers, who take their children out of school during term time without authorisation, may be issued with a penalty fine per parent and may face prosecution in court.

## Punctuality

Being late to school has a significant impact on the amount of learning time lost over a school year. The table below will help you understand how much time is lost by being regularly late:

Minutes late per day	Number of days over a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	6.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

## Registration

Due to Covid 19, we currently offer a staggered start to the day. Morning Registration is between 08.45am and 9.15am – the school gates will be closed at 9.15am.

Afternoon Registration is between 1.00pm and 1.30pm.

*Timings are subject to change and dependent on each year group.*

Each class teacher or their nominated representative is responsible for completing the register at morning and afternoon registration. The registers must be completed promptly to avoid discrepancies between classes.

## Lateness

Children arriving at school late, must go to the main entrance and sign in. The school office is responsible for maintaining the signing in system.

In accordance with current guidance, the attendance registers are closed at 9.30am. This means that any child who arrives after the registration period (8.45 to 9.15am) but before the registers are closed (9.30am) will be given a late mark (L) in the register. This code is classed as a present mark, but displays that the child arrived

late for school. Any child who arrives after the registers have closed (9.30am) but before the end of the morning session will be given a "late after registers closed" mark (U) in the register. This code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the child was physically present in school for part of the session.

In addition to using the L and U codes, when signing in, the system logs the number of minutes late. This facility will allow school staff to monitor and manage developing patterns of lateness more effectively and make a clear link between lateness and missed curriculum; and share such information with parents.

The fact that the U code is classed as an unauthorised absence means that when it is used children are likely to be missing significant amounts of schooling, putting their educational progress at risk. For this reason, the use of this code will be considered as serious as any other unauthorised absence and will attract the interest of external agencies, including referral to the local authority attendance team and consideration of the use of legal measures, in just the same way. This could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice being issued.

### **Signing Out**

The school office is responsible for overseeing the procedure for releasing children where parents/carers have requested and been granted leave during the school day. The child(ren) can only be released to a parent or authorised carer/family member. When an authorised adult is picking up a child within school time the school office is responsible for ensuring that they sign out using the electronic system.

### **Continuing concerns regarding attendance**

We will communicate verbally and by letter to parents and carers of children who have attendance or lateness rates that are a concern, and we will always offer support where we can. If attendance continues to be of concern and there are a number of unauthorised absences then this may lead to a referral being made directly to the EWO.

Ultimately parents/carers can be held to account for failing to ensure that their children attend school punctually and regularly. Where necessary statutory action can and will be taken, which may take the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution of parents in the Magistrates Court resulting in a fine, or a statutory order.

**Approved by Governors: Autumn 2020**

**Review Date: Autumn 2021**