

SCOTTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Scotts Primary School is a successful school and your child plays an important part in making it so. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time every day the school is open, unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND THE EDUCATION ACT 1996

Section 7 of the Act requires all parents/carers of a child of compulsory school age who are registered at a school to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. **Failure to do so is an offence.** Neglect of this responsibility can result in the prosecution of parents/carers, with a penalty fine of up to £1000.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE?

Authorised absences are those which the school agree are unavoidable, e.g. illness, family bereavement, medical appointments that are unavoidable in school time (provided a written explanation is received and an appointment card is produced) and other absences for which leave has been given by the Head Teacher. i.e. a pupil competing in a sporting event, dance or musical performance; external examination or religious observance. (These are limited to 10 sessions or 5 days per academic year and upon the child's overall attendance not falling below 95%).

Unauthorised absences are those that the school considers avoidable, for example, e.g. minor ailments, birthdays, shopping trips, day trips etc.

An absence is unauthorised until an acceptable written/emailed explanation is received. If no acceptable explanation is received, in writing or by email, within one month of the absence, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Under new DFE legislation effective 1st September 2013, Headteachers **may not grant** any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances such as:**

- Parents in the services such as armed forces or police.
- Serious illness of a sibling or parent.
- Funeral of immediate family member - eg Grandparent. (Limited to 1 day).

Family holidays are not regarded as exceptional circumstances, therefore any absence taken for holidays will be subject to a fixed penalty notice. From 1 September 2013 fines will be as follows:

£60 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 21 days
£120 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 28 days.

REPORTING ABSENCES

If a child is ill and unable to attend school, the parent/carer should contact the school on the first day (preferably before 8.55am), in person, by telephone or by email at the following address absence@scotts.havering.sch.uk . The school should be contacted again on day 3 if the child remains unwell. When a child returns, he or she must bring a written note signed by the parent/carer for each period of absence, unless an email has been previously sent on the first day of the absence. If a child is absent without parental notification then a phone call will be made to the parent shortly after 9am to determine a reason for absence. If a child does not want to attend school for any reason, it is important that parents/carers do not collude with the child by supplying a note stating sickness as a reason for absence. Parents/carers must discuss the problem with the school at the first opportunity and, if it cannot be resolved, a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service.

If a pupil is absent for 5 days or more the parent/carer may be asked to provide Medical/Supporting Evidence to cover the period of absence.

If a pupil is absent prior to or does not return after a school half term/term the parent may be asked to provide Medical/Supporting Evidence to cover the period of absence.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the school year for whatever reason. In cases of persistent absence or patterns of absence, the school will request evidence of attendance at the GP, via the Education Welfare Officer. Where persistent absenteeism does not improve a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer will be made. This will initiate more formal procedures such as LA written warnings and the issuing of fines.

LATENESS

A child must be in class each day at 8.55am. Children who arrive after this time are recorded as late. Any child arriving late for school will need to report to reception and a reason for lateness recorded.

Punctuality – is just as important as regular attendance.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

If your child has a medical appointment during the school day, a letter should be sent into school along with appointment card/letter.

INFORMING PARENTS

A summary of a child's attendance is recorded on the Annual Report. If a child's attendance is shown to be giving cause for concern a letter will be written to the parents informing them of this. Often parents can be unaware that a few single days of absence can soon add up.

Similarly if a child is persistently late a letter will be written to parents informing them of this. If the situation does not improve a referral to the Education Welfare officer will be made.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE (EWO) – REFERRAL SYSTEM

As a school, all staff members discuss attendance patterns on a regular basis. If a school has a concern it will raise this concern with parents/carers of pupils. Pupils with attendance of 90% or less, or with an identified pattern of absence or lateness, will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. Each school is allocated an Education Welfare Officer who will liaise with them to ensure attendance meets targets set and will contact and visit parents/carers when a referral is made.

Following the intervention of the EWO, attendance will be reviewed regularly and if there is no improvement then a FIXED PENALTY NOTICE may be issued.

Dated: Sept 2016