

PILTON INFANTS' SCHOOL

Attendance Policy 2016

(Approved by the Pilton Infants' Governing Body on 13 July 2016)

Rationale

Pilton Infants' School aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. We will operate a fair and consistent approach to the management of attendance and absence at school.

Statutory Framework

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, fulltime education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised (see below).

Roles and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at Pilton Infants' School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community, including pupils, parents and staff.

□ Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their teacher and, if the need should arise, from the head.

□ Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible, either in writing or by telephone call. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parents. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns that may arise over a child's attendance. If possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.

Parents whose first language is not English, or who have literacy difficulties, will be offered appropriate support from the school in matters of communication.

□ School

Staff encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. The school will employ a range of strategies (see below) to encourage good attendance and punctuality, and, liaising closely with parents, will promptly investigate all absenteeism. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently.

Registration

Registers will be called promptly at 9.00am and at 1.20pm.

If a pupil arrives after the register has been called but before the close of registration, he/she will be marked as 'late before close of registration'. Registration closes at 9.20am and 1.30pm. If pupils arrive after the registers have closed, he/she will be marked as 'late after close of registration'. This counts as an absence, usually unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances for the lateness.

All class teachers will take registers in each of their classes and send the register down to the administration office for transfer of information on to SIMs.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.

Pilton Infants' School will decide on how an absence is to be recorded according to 'School Attendance: Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence' (DfES 1994). This states that:

Absence can be **authorised** if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body of the school'. This is the Headteacher of Pilton Infants' School.
- The pupil was ill or 'prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause'. Evidence of this may be requested if the pupil has previous excessive illness absence.
- The absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs'
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LEA for any of the following:
 1. The child's transport to and from school,
 2. Boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school, and
 3. Enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home.
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in paragraph 47 of the guidance are met
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is attending a viewing for a place at another school
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit
- the pupil is participating in an approved public performance
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. if a pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling)
- leave of absence may be authorised by the school for a family holiday of no more than two weeks – suggest this is deleted
(see **Holidays** below).

Absence should be **unauthorised** if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (the guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances)
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday, shopping)

□ the pupil is away from school on a family holiday without permission, or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead seek retrospective approval on their return.

Holidays – term time holidays can be avoided, illnesses can not!

Parents are strongly urged to avoid taking family holidays during term time. Indeed, parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday.

In September 2013 changes to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, removed any reference to holidays in term time and now only allows schools to authorise absences in **exceptional** circumstances.) An exceptional circumstance at Pilton Infants' School means that the circumstance is unique to the child/family. For example, the wedding of a child's parents would not be an exceptional circumstance because the parents can choose when they marry. However, if the wedding was a family member the child's own family would have no choice when that wedding took place and so may be authorised by the school. If the wedding was in another country and necessitated several days off school then the school might allow a few days to travel, attend the wedding and then return home.

Requests for a term time holiday, as for other planned absences must be made on the S2 form available from the school office. Our Governing Body have delegated authorisation of holidays in term time to the Headteacher.

Procedures for Following Up Absence

□ Pilton Infants' School operates a 'First Day Response'. Parents are expected to contact the school on the first day of the child's absence. If by 9.30am, there has been no contact from the parents to the school, one of the administrative staff will contact the parents, enquiring the reason for absence, the expected day of return and reminding parents of their duty to report to the school.

□ If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the head teacher will contact the parents.

□ If a pupil is persistently absent, or late, and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer during his/her consultation visit.

Parents of pupils with attendance below 90% will be requested to meet with will be referred to) the Educational Welfare Officer.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

□ Pilton Infants' School will work to provide an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed, that pupils feel their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.

□ Pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement. The head teacher will monitor and review these targets.

□ Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period will, when appropriate, have work sent home to them and will be given suitable support upon their return to school.

□ Pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period will, when appropriate, have individually tailored reintegration programmes prepared for them.

□ The head teacher will include attendance matters in the termly reports to the school's governing body.

□ The head teacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies – when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

□ The head teacher will have regular meetings with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Rewards for good attendance

Attendance class of the week – every week one class gets extra golden time for best attendance and they are recognised in the weekly newsletter.

Attendance pencils each half term for those with 100% attendance

Attendance certificate at end of year for 100%

Regular praise during assemblies for good attendance and reminders to children about how important good attendance at school is.

Regular reminders to parents in newsletters about the importance of good attendance and 'a day missed is an important day of learning missed'.