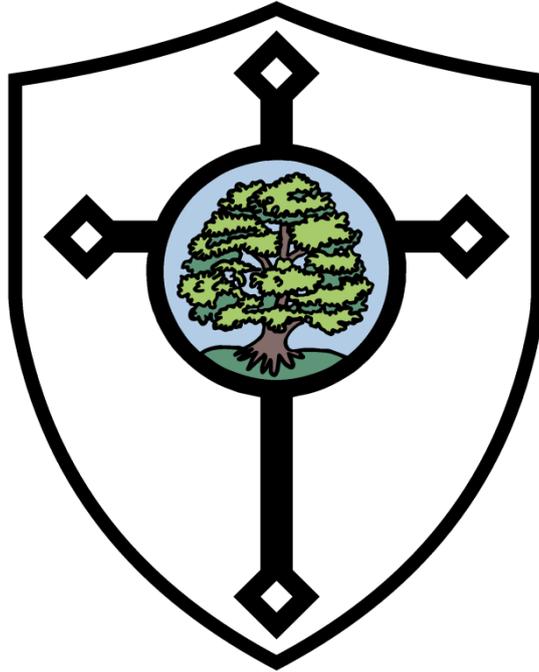


The New Forest C of E (VA) Primary School

at Landford, Nomansland & Hamptworth



Attendance Policy

Adopted: March 2014

Last reviewed/approved: March 2017

Review: three yearly

Status: non-statutory

Attendance Policy

The New Forest Church of England Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, governors and volunteers to share this commitment. We have adopted the '*Fruits of the Spirit*' (Galatians 5:22) as our school values and expect these to be demonstrated by everyone in our school in accordance with our mission statement '*Growing and Learning Together through Christian Values*'.

1. Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils. The school's ethos demonstrates that children feel that their presence in school is important, that they are missed when they are absent or late. The school will take appropriate action when necessary in order to promote the aims of the policy.

We expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2. Aims

- To maximise attendance of all children;
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated at the school;
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty;
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice;
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams:
 - monitoring individual children's attendance.

3. Administration

- The register is taken by each class teacher at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Morning registration takes place at 08:55.
- Afternoon registration takes place at 13:10.
- The School uses SIMS School Manager System to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are returned to the school office after the closure of the registration period.

- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

4. Absence

4.1. Lateness

- Pupils arriving after the register has been closed at 09:05/13:10pm, will be considered as late.
- Pupils arriving after 09:05/13:10 must report to the school office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality.

4.2. Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note, emails, or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

4.3. If a child is absent

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, who will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.

Parents and carers should notify the school of any absence due to illness by 09:00 either by telephone, e-mail, or in person.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4.4. Requests for leave of absence

4.4.1. Medical or dental appointments

- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours if at all possible.
- The school must be informed of any absence due to medical or dental appointments ahead of the absence being taken. This should be done by informing the school office.
- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers must sign their child/children out of school if they take them to an appointment during school hours.

4.4.2. Term-time absences

The **Department for Education** states; every day at school counts enormously and so does every consecutive day attended by pupils. Pupils need to be able to absorb new facts and knowledge, acquire new skills and consolidate before building further and progressing. They simply cannot do so if their structured school terms are disrupted by too many preventable absences.

Parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school and Head Teachers are only able to authorise absence from school in **exceptional circumstances**. In making a request for an authorised absence from school you will need to explain why the circumstances are exceptional. Requests for a child to be absent from school must be made in writing at least two weeks prior to the intended absence date. 'Term Time Absence' requests forms are available from both school offices.

Full details of the Term Time Absence guidance and related documents are displayed at both school sites and are available on our website.

If you take your child out of school without permission the absence will be unauthorised and we may have to notify the Education Welfare Service. The Local Authority issue Penalty Notices for unauthorised Leave of Absence.

4.4.3. Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

4.5. Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

- **Governors:**
 - To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
 - To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

- **Head Teacher:**
 - To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil, group, and whole school attendance patterns.
 - To monitor individual pupil, group, and whole school attendance and punctuality.
 - To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/or punctuality is an issue.
 - To provide governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
 - To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.

- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- **Class teacher:**
 - To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
 - To respond promptly to any issue raised in the analysis of registers by office staff.
 - To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.
- **Office staff:**
 - To record the reasons for absence given to them on the appropriate recording sheet.
 - To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
 - To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
 - To contact parents/carers regarding their child's absence to establish the reason.
 - To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each day.
 - To make a judgement in conjunction with the Head Teacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- **Education Welfare Officer:**
 - To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
 - To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the governors at the annual governors' target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then passed to the LA. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they receive regular updates of attendance data within the Head Teacher's Reports to Governors ahead of each full governing body meeting.

The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

If there is concern about a child's absence teachers will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head Teacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

6. Monitoring and evaluation

Attendance data will be collected to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with: incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absence; periods of un-authorised absence. This data will be discussed with the EWO if necessary.

The Head Teacher and EWO will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance.

The governors will set an annual target of attendance and unauthorised absence and review this annually at its first meeting.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.