

Mayfield CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

September 2017

To be reviewed: January 2019

This policy will be reviewed every year

Signed:..... Dated:.....
(Headteacher)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mayfield CE Primary School

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Mayfield CE Primary School by

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ *parents keeping children off school unnecessarily*
- ❖ *truancy before or during the school day*
- ❖ *absences which have never been properly explained*
- ❖ *children who arrive at school too late to get a mark*

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out

in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Education Authority. The EWO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Role of the School in ensuring regular and punctual attendance

The school has the legally defined responsibility to ensure that all children receive a minimum of twenty-one teaching hours a week. This does not include time for registration or collective worship. The school's responsibility is:

- to register children promptly and accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session
- to record absences appropriately, including the signing in and out of pupils during school hours
- to record as **late** those pupils who arrive **after the close of Registers at 9.15am and before 9.30am**
- to record as **unauthorised absence** those pupils who arrive **after the close of Registers at 9.30am.**
- to check Registers daily for first day absences
- to telephone those parents and carers who have not contacted the school by the required time on the first day of absence. In these instances, priority will be given to:
 1. children on the Child Protection Register or involved with Children's Social Care
 2. children in families where there is a particular concern
 3. children, whose parents or carers are normally fastidious in making contact
- to send a letter home to parents who cannot be contacted, to ask them why their child is absent
- to keep records of all telephone calls and keep all letters concerning punctuality and attendance
- to regularly monitor punctuality and attendance and take appropriate action
- to involve the relevant services if a parent or carer fails to make first day contact on **three** occasions during a school academic year

- to inform the relevant services of any pupils whose attendance is giving cause for concern
- to obtain details of telephone contacts (including emergency contact details) for all pupils and to ensure that records are regularly updated
- to send regular reminders to parents and carers about the importance of punctuality and attendance
- to raise concerns regarding attendance at parent consultation meetings, or sooner if necessary
- not to authorise holiday requests unless exceptional circumstance are apparent (see Request for Absence form for further details)
- to report all unauthorised absences on a child's annual school report
- to publish attendance data in the School Prospectus
- to report all attendance data, including authorised and unauthorised absences, to East Sussex Children's Services and to the DfE
- to set and monitor attendance targets annually.

Role of Parents and Carers in ensuring regular and punctual attendance

It is the legal responsibility of parents or carers to;

- ensure children attend school regularly. 'Regularly', according to the DfE, means attending on every occasion when the pupil is required to attend. The only exceptions are the ones that are set out in legislation; "sickness, unavoidable causes, religious holidays, authorised absences, the Local Authority's 'failure to make statutory travel arrangements, or, where a child has no fixed abode, the parent's need to travel for business (subject to certain conditions)"
- ensure that pupils are on the school premises each day no later than 9.00am and not before 8.45am. Children arriving on the school site before 8.45am remain the responsibility of their parents/carers
- take children who are late to the School Office to 'sign in'
- collect children promptly at the end of the school day - 3.10/3.15pm
- collect children promptly after extra-curricular activities
- ensure that the school has current contact details including emergency contact telephone numbers and addresses.

3.1 Absences for Medical Reasons

It is the responsibility of parents or carers to;

- notify the school as early as possible on the first day of absence and no later than 9.10am.
- agree a later registration time with the Headteacher if a child needs regular medical attention before coming to school
- where possible, arrange medical appointments outside school hours. For medical appointments during school hours, School Office staff should be informed in writing or a Medical Appointment Card provided
- liaise with the school about specific home problems which might cause attendance difficulties.

3.2 Absence for Holidays/Family Outings

Requests for holidays/family outings in term time **will not** be authorised unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. It is the responsibility of parents or carers to complete a Holiday Request Form and return it to the school **at least 14 days** before the date the holiday/leave is due to start. It is important for parents to detail the circumstances around why the request is being made for term time leave. Further evidence for the purposes of clarification may be requested in exceptional circumstances. For example, if an employer is responsible for directing an employee's holiday time and this time always falls out of all school holidays leaving no time for a family break a letter from an employer will be required and further evidence such as rosters may be requested.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

The Governing Body of Mayfield CEP have made the decision that any unauthorised absence which is eligible for a Local Authority Penalty Notice (that is absences of 5 days or more in one go) will now be referred to the Local Authority for the decision regarding a penalty notice to be made.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy was reviewed in January 2017
Date for review - January 2018

