

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**1. INTRODUCTION and AIMS**

Redlands Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. If allowed to remain unchecked, persistent absence and lateness can significantly impact on a pupil's progress and achievement. Our partnerships with parents play a vital role in ensuring that this is achieved.

In line with the 1996 Education Act, 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 believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to create a happy and rewarding environment for all children – a place where they want to come. We will make the best provision we can for any children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in school life and to share and support their child's learning. Through our home-school agreement parents agree to ensure that their child has regular and punctual attendance. As part of our annual written report to parents, the children's attendance records are shared.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 To meet the Government attendance targets set for us.
- 2.2 To create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents and carers.
- 2.3 To ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.

**3. SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- 3.2 To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- 3.3 To have appropriate registrations processes in place.
- 3.4 To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- 3.5 To inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- 3.6 To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- 3.7 To report to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and support their work with pupils as necessary.
- 3.8 To report to the Government on attendance three times a year.
- 3.9 To administer the attendance procedure consistently.
- 3.10 To ensure EWO contacts the parent before interviewing the child regarding absence.
- 3.11 To make it clear that the Headteacher has the responsibility to decide if an absence is to be authorised, even if an absence request with reasons for the request has been received.

**4. PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1 To have children in school, ready for the start of the school day by 08:50am.
- 4.2 To inform school on the first day of any absence and daily thereafter. Parents will not keep children off school for minor ailments. Should a child fall ill at school, s/he will be sent home.
- 4.3 To provide medical evidence upon request.
- 4.4 To work with the school and the EWO to improve lateness and attendance

- 4.5 To contact the school office to request leave of absence forms which must be completed at least 10 days in advance (with the exception of emergency or compassionate leave). All requests for leave of absence must be made using the correct form (available on the school website and from the office).
- 4.6 To comply with the attached attendance information regarding holidays.

## 5. PROCESSES FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

- 5.1 The school's Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss this regularly with the Headteacher. Where concerns are raised the school will discuss with parents/carers in the hope that issues can be resolved informally. Where concerns persist a referral will be made to the EWO who may investigate the matter further.
- 5.2 If, following EWO intervention, attendance does not improve the Local Authority may choose to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice fine (FPN) or consider the legal route of prosecution through the Magistrates Court.
- 5.3 An FPN is a fine issued per parent per child and currently is £120 (but reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days). Failure to pay within 28 days could well result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court where parents may receive a further fine and a criminal conviction.
- 5.4 Lateness will be monitored and parents will be contacted if this persists. Children must be in school by 8.50am each day.
- 5.5 If a child is late they should come to the main office and report to the member of staff on duty. If a child arrives after 9.15am, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless a valid reason can be given. Evidence of all medical appointments must be provided.

## 6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

- 6.1 The law says that pupils are not entitled to leave of absence during term time. The Government, the Local Authority and the Governing Body at Redlands stress that leave of absence should only be taken during designated school holidays.
- 6.2 Term time leave of absence will not be authorised. However, the Headteacher has the discretionary power to agree to an absence **in exceptional circumstances** and work will usually be set for the pupil to complete during this period. Any requests not agreed by the Headteacher will be recorded as unauthorised and may incur a fixed penalty fine from the Local Authority currently £120 per parent per child.
- 6.3 The school's policy is as follows:
  - 6.3.1 Parents/carers must request leave in writing, using the absence request form, as far in advance as possible – **this should be at least 10 working (school) days in advance and before any travel arrangements are made.**
  - 6.3.2 The request must include the reason for the absence in term time, including any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances, such as a medical certificate or letter from employers. This allows the Headteacher to make a decision on reasonable grounds.
  - 6.3.3 The child's attendance to date, prior absence requests and academic progress will be taken into account as part of the decision-making process.
  - 6.3.4 A decision will be made as soon as possible and not less than 5 working (school) days prior to the absence start date.
- 6.4 In exceptional circumstances authority can be granted for an extended period of absence. However, failure to return to school on the agreed date may well result in the pupil being removed from the school roll. Any extended leave taken without authority may result in the removal of the pupil from the school roll. In the event of being taken off the school roll, this would necessitate a new application for a place, which will be subject to availability.

**It is the duty of all parents/carers to ensure their children are at school on time for the maximum number of days.**

**There are 190 school days and it is a national expectation that children will be in school for a minimum of 95% of those days.**

**This means that only 5% absence is acceptable which equals approximately 10 days of absence over the whole year, including illness.**

## **7. SICKNESS**

- 7.1 Parents MUST notify the school on the first day of the illness and daily thereafter.
- 7.2 The school reserves the right to request medical evidence regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- 7.3 The Headteacher has the legal right to decide if it is appropriate to authorise the absence.
- 7.4 If a child has been suffering from vomiting or diarrhoea we request that the child remains at home for at least 48 hours after the vomiting or diarrhoea has ceased, according to the Health & Safety Executive's guidance. For children who have had a temperature, we request that the child remains at home for 24 hours after the temperature has returned to normal
- 7.5 All appointments, (e.g. medical (doctor or dentist), legal) should be made out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible appointments should be made at the beginning or the end of the school day and will be recorded as authorised in the register. The school is entitled to ask to see documentation relating to the appointment.
- 7.6 Parents/carers are asked to ensure their children are in school before and after appointments wherever possible.

## **8. EDUCATIONAL EVENTS AND VISITS**

- 8.1 Occasionally children may attend educational events such as music exams or personal sporting competitions. Participation in such events needs to be requested using an absence request form and authorised by the Headteacher.
- 8.2 Any educational visits promoted by school for individuals, such as visits to secondary schools, or any trips or visits undertaken by classes as part of the curriculum are recorded as authorised in the register.

## **9. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

- 9.1 For families whose religious festivals fall during term time, pupils may have one day absence which is recorded as authorised in the register. This has been agreed by the Local Authority and the relevant religious bodies.
- 9.2 Annual attendance figures for pupils will be given to the parent(s) with the child's end of year report, and regular updates will be sent to parents/carers where their child's attendance falls 5% or more below the 95% national average.
- 9.3 All of these measures are designed to ensure children miss as little school as possible. **Please note that no-one has a right to any days out of school. There is no 10-day holiday allocation, and all requests for absence will not be authorised unless satisfactory evidence is provided to support a claim for exceptional circumstances.**
- 9.4 Unauthorised absence is monitored by the EWO and, should concerns be raised by the level of attendance, parents/carers will be contacted by the EWO to outline the action which may be taken.

**Review Date: Spring 2020**