



Netherseal St.Peter's C E (C) Primary School

Policy for Attendance & Punctuality

We believe that regular school attendance is important if children are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them in law.

Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.

The school takes measures to ensure maximum attendance:

- Investigates individual attendance patterns
- Takes steps to advise parents of the impact of high rates of absence
- Involves the Education Welfare Service to support parents of children with unsatisfactory attendance
- Positively promotes high attendance

The Partnership between Parents and School

Parental responsibility extends beyond securing regular school attendance. Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly attired and in a condition to learn. Furthermore parents should see themselves as partners with schools in the education of their children. This means instilling in their children a respect for education – and for those who deliver it – and ensuring that children complete homework on time. Parents should also impress upon their children the need to observe the school's codes of conduct.

The School Will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and know that their presence is valued
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other communications to parents
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly
- Enquire about an absence if the parent has not contacted the school on the first day of absence
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Education Welfare Service, Health, Social Services etc.)
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents
- Develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality
- Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence

The School Expects that Parents Will:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address
- Notify the school, in person or by telephone, when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence and on each day thereafter until the child's return to school
- Provide a written note indicating the reason for absence, on the child's return to School
- Provide a written note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor, optician etc. before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day
- Ensure that their child is collected on time at the close of school each day
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child

Registration

All schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent and whether absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised.

The School operates in accordance with LA guidelines for the format of recording absence and the symbols used to distinguish between different categories of absence. These guidelines can be found within each register.

Arrival

School doors are opened at 8:50 am when it is expected that all children will be assembled on the playground ready to start the school day. Children arriving on the playground before this time remain the responsibility of parents. At 8:55 am, immediately after all children have entered the building, the doors will be closed for security reasons.

Late Arrival

For purposes of fire regulations, children arriving after 8:55 am must report to the school office where they will be seen by the school clerk who will record the pupil's name, class, time and reason for lateness. The signature of a parent/carer will also be required.

Close of School

School finishes at 3:30 pm Monday to Thursday and at 3:00 pm on Friday. Children in the Reception/Year 1 class must be collected from the Infant door, whereas children in all other classes should be collected from the playground.

Late Collection

Children who are not collected on time will be taken to the office by their class teacher, who will then endeavour to contact the parents. All children collected late from school will be entered into the late collection register. Parents/Carers arriving late to collect children need to sign for the child and the time of collection will be recorded. The collection and registering procedure also applies to children being collected from school after attending an after school club, educational visit or event.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Absences will be recorded on the electronic registration system. Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone but must be followed by a letter on the child's return to school. The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher, if the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on an annual report to parents. Where there is cause for concern, i.e. when attendance is below 90% in any term, the reasons for this will be investigated and where appropriate, will be referred to Education Welfare for consideration of penalty notice. In such a case, the LA can apply to the courts for an education supervision order and, where

necessary, can prosecute parents. The EWO is employed to help the LA to carry out this statutory responsibility. The EWO may visit the home to assess difficulties in maintaining regular attendance in the wider family context and may be a channel to other agencies (e.g. Social Care.) It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to the DfE.

The school will encourage good attendance by celebrating 100% attendance publicly with a certificate at the end of each school term. In addition, the class with the highest attendance each week will receive an extra 5 minutes playtime for one day.

Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments

Section 199 of the Education Act 1993 provides that no offence is committed where a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness. If a school is satisfied that a pupil is absent as a result of illness the absence will be **authorised**.

Where there is doubt about the authenticity of absence attributed to illness, the school and EWO can refer the matter to the School Health Service.

Routine dental or medical appointments should be made outside of school hours wherever possible. On the rare occasions when this cannot be arranged, parents must provide a written note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor, optician etc. before the arranged appointment, unless an emergency situation has arisen

Where a child is present for registration but then has to attend an appointment, the school will note the fact for emergency evacuation. For the same reasons the school will note the presence of a child who was not there when the register was being taken but returns later from an appointment.

Off-Site Activities

These may be school directed (educational visits, approved sporting activities) or peculiar to a particular individual (music exams). Absence from the former will be authorised and discretion applied to the latter taking account of individual attendance records and the nature of the request.

Excluded Pupils

Where a child has been temporarily excluded (either for a fixed period or indefinitely) he or she should remain on the school roll. Since the action results from specific action by the head teacher, ie the decision to exclude, it should be treated as **authorised** absence.

Leave of Absence, Including Holidays, During Term Time

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. **These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.** These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the school office for consideration by the Headteacher prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made. Each request is taken on its own merits and based on the information supplied by the parent. Where a request is refused and the child is kept away from school anyway, this would be treated as **unauthorised** absence.

Where a child is kept away from school for a family holiday or other reason without authorisation being sought, this would be treated as **unauthorised** absence.

Under each of the above circumstances parents may be issued with a Penalty Notice which if unpaid could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996. From 1st September 2017, if requested, Derbyshire County Council will consider the issue of a penalty

notice for any period of holiday absence which has not been authorised by the Headteacher, regardless of the child's wider school attendance.

April 2018

This policy was approved by Governors on 3rd May 2018