



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## **RATIONALE**

We expect all children on roll to attend 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, due to ill health, 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 the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## **ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION**

- All children should be ready to come into school at 8.50am each day although children are entitled to enter the school from 8.45am. The register is taken twice a day at 8.55am and 1.00pm. A day counts as 2 attendances.
- Morning registration ends at 9.00am. If your child arrives after the registration period, he / she will be marked in as Late. After 9.30am this

will become an Unauthorised Absence. The afternoon register is taken at 1.00p.m.

- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent / guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in / out register in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

## **ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for your child to be out of school for this reason, they should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of your child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence.

## **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 and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. · Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents 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 Headteacher.

## **IF A CHILD IS ABSENT**

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register.
- The school office will endeavour to contact the parent or guardian, if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence.

- Parents are, however, expected to email or telephone the school by 9.00a.m. on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason.
- 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.

### **THE EDUCATION (PUPIL REGISTRATION) REGULATIONS 1995**

- Section 8(1) "Leave of absence may only be granted by a person authorised in that behalf by the proprietor of the school". Section 8(3) of this act gives the school discretionary powers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of annual holiday during term time.
- Leave within term time is not an entitlement and will no longer be authorized by the Government, Local Authority, the Governors or by the Headteacher of the school unless there are very exceptional circumstances.

### **HOLIDAYS**

- The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time as this will be classed as unauthorised absence, which may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued by the Local Authority.

### **EXAMPLES OF WHAT WILL NOT CONSTITUTE EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

- To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or a special family celebration (eg. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; or to attend a special religious/cultural festival; or the availability of a reduced cost term time holiday.

### **CRITERIA BY WHICH THE HEADTEACHER WILL MAKE DECISIONS CONCERNING THE AUTHORISATION OF TERM TIME LEAVE**

- The general attendance of pupils will be considered. If a child has had a significant number of absences for any reason they will not be able to "afford" to miss any further schooling.
- A holiday request for exceptional circumstances is unlikely to be approved unless the child's attendance is 95% or above for the past year.
- The timing of the proposed leave - one of the worst times for a child to be absent is at the beginning of a new school year, particularly with a new teacher or a new class; and for Year 6 pupils, in the build up to and during the National Curriculum tests.
- Teachers will not set work for completion when a child is absent on term time leave, but the child should be encouraged to read and keep a diary of their experiences.
- One day will be granted as authorised term time leave for Religious Observance. A term time leave request form must still be completed and submitted to school prior to the required day of observance.

## **PENALTY NOTICES**

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue penalty notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others, and can leave a pupil vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime.

Parents / Carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Depending on the circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## **WHEN ARE THEY ISSUED**

Lancashire County Council, our School Governors and Headteacher consider regular attendance at school is of such importance that penalty notices may be used in a range of situations where unauthorised absence occurs such as:

- unauthorised absence
- truancy

- parentally condoned absence without good reason
- persistent late arrival at school (after the registers have closed)
- unauthorised leave in term time
- delayed return from authorised leave

## **WHAT IS THE COST**

Penalty notices are issued the Local Authority at a cost of £120 per parent, per child within school. However if paid within 21 days of it being issued this will reduce to £60 per parent, per child within school.

## **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 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.

## **REPEATED UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

- Unauthorised absences remain on the child's record and may be reported to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the EWO and the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents and guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.
- The EWO may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- The LA has 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.

## **REWARDS FOR GOOD ATTENDANCE**

All children who have 100% attendance by the end of the Summer Term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance which will be awarded in the final assembly of the Summer Term.

## **ATTENDANCE TARGETS**

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the senior staff, the Chair of Governors and the LA School Improvement Partner at the annual target-setting meeting. The Headteacher will report on attendance percentages in the termly report to the Governing Body.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEWING**

- It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance.
- 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 the school's 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.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they 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 Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.