



## **Tany's Dell Primary School Attendance Policy October 2018**

### **Statement of Intent**

Tany's Dell Primary School is committed to providing a full and balanced educational experience to all its pupils.

We believe that for pupils to benefit from their primary school education, good attendance and punctuality is crucial. As a school, we organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our school gives high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish and maintain strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance, we investigate, identify any issues and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve these as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### **Aims**

We aim to raise and maintain attendance levels by

- promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently

Parents should...

- on the first day of any absence, inform the school immediately by telephone, before 10am; either speak to a member of staff directly or leave a message on the schools answer machine. Please state clearly the child's name, class and the reason for the absence. Please follow this procedure daily, until the child returns to school.
- on the child's return to school, please **confirm in writing** the reason for the child's absence and hand it to a member of staff. (consideration is given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language).
- take all family holidays and non-medical related leave during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused. The Local Authority can issue penalty notices to each parent who takes term-time holidays.
- work actively with school staff and external agencies to resolve attendance issues if required.
- make sure their child arrives to school on time every day, wearing the correct uniform. Please also ensure they have the correct equipment with them such as PE kits, book bags etc. It is imperative children get a good night's sleep and a hearty breakfast to ensure they arrive to school alert and ready to learn.

***Parents may be prosecuted if their child does not attend school regularly and punctually.***

### The Children's Commitment

***I will aim for 100% attendance. I will arrive at school on time and be ready to learn with everything I need, every day.***

The school will:

- positively support school attendance wherever possible - the promotion of good communication and co-operation between all parties involved will be paramount
- record and monitor the attendance of pupils for both the morning and afternoon sessions.
- develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance
- encourage open communication channels between home and school
- follow procedures leading to a formal referral to the Attendance Compliance Team at Essex County Council
- monitor punctuality closely. Children will make up for lost learning through lateness at break-times.
- continue to develop a range of procedures to tackle persistent lateness, including school meetings and the possible involvement of outside agencies.

## **Registration**

At Tany's Dell School an electronic registration system is used. Pupils are registered in their classrooms by their class teacher or teaching assistant.

The school receptionist is responsible for logging any late marks and then printing paper copies at the end of the registration to ensure registers are available in case of an emergency.

Messages from parents/carers are recorded onto the on-line register and relevant notes regarding a pupil's absence may be stored on the pupil's file and retained for three years.

## **Start and Close of registration**

The school gates close promptly at 8.45am, to ensure children are settled in class by 8.50am, when the register is taken.

If a pupil arrives after the gates are closed they should report to reception to be entered into the late record book.

Pupils arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

Minutes lost due to persistent lateness will be made up at playtime.

The timing for afternoon registration varies as it links to staggered lunch times. Foundation stage registration is at 12.55pm, Key Stage One is at 1.20pm and Key Stage Two is at 1.30pm.

## **Staff responsible for processes**

Our Family Support Worker is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns, including those that link to Safeguarding issues.

The administrative team are responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals.

The class teacher is responsible for ensuring that the register is taken daily, once for the AM session and once for the PM session, and totals the registers before closing the on-line register to enable the receptionist to access it.

The Teachers' Induction Booklet ensures that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive regular in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

Each pupil should be called by name when the register is being taken.

## **Procedures for following up absence/lateness**

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on each morning of the child's absence. If this contact is not made then the school will:

- Send an email requesting contact by the parent
- Contact the parent by telephone
- Make a home visit to check on the welfare of the child and family (if it is deemed unsafe for staff to conduct a welfare check then this stage will be omitted)
- Call the police and ask them to make welfare enquiries, if all of the above actions fail to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child

Early intervention is key to promoting good attendance. As soon as a concern is identified, the school will write to parents/carers.

If this letter does not have a positive impact, a second letter will be sent to the parent/carer, where they will be invited into school to discuss the issue. The purpose of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

It may be necessary for the school or the Essex Attendance Compliance Team to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence, especially if we have reason to believe the child had an unauthorised holiday.

Examples of evidences are:

- ◆ Appointment cards/letters/texts
- ◆ Medical certificate
- ◆ Letter from GP

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school or the Attendance Compliance Team may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child. This is in line with our safeguarding procedures.

If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved then a formal referral will be made by the school to the Attendance Compliance Team, the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service. This might lead to a penalty notice of £60 being served to each parent for each child absent from school.

## **Procedures for unauthorised holidays and persistent absenteeism**

Parents do not have a right to take children out of school during term time. Any request for leave of absence to be taken must be made **in person** to the Headteacher. The application will be considered against the pupil's attendance record, family circumstances and timing with regard to assessments and examinations.

- We will only authorise a maximum of 3 days absence without suitable medical evidence being produced. In order for a child's absence to be authorised for the entire duration of an illness (beyond 3 days), you must provide the school with sufficient evidence of illness.
- The national threshold for children classed as 'persistent absentees' (PA) is met when attendance falls below 90%. Therefore any child with an attendance rate of less than 90% is classed as a PA by the local authority. As attendance is closely linked with attainment, any absence for a child who is a 'persistent absentee' will no longer be authorised without medical evidence being provided. This may be a label from a bottle of prescription medicine, an appointment card or medical letter etc.
- No absences will be authorised a week before or after a school holiday without medical evidence being produced. If the school has reason to believe the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday, we will mark the register accordingly and you may be issued with a penalty notice from the local authority. The onus is on the parent/carer to prove the child was not on holiday.
- We will not authorise any absences which fall on days where there may be adverse weather conditions, but the school is open or when there is a special sporting activity/celebration such as The World Cup, Royal wedding etc, without suitable evidence of genuine illness being obtained.
- Should your child suffer from mental health issues such as anxiety, low self-esteem or depression, or experience friendship issues, bullying or other issues that prevent them from wanting to come to school; it is imperative that you inform the school immediately and work closely with us to address such issues. It is also important that your child is brought to school every day whilst we work to address this issue as non-attendance only exacerbates the problem.
- Tany's Dell will endeavour to work closely with parents/carers to improve attendance and punctuality, but where no improvement is made each parent may be issued with a penalty notice by the local authority (currently £60 per parent) for failing to ensure their child attends school regularly

### **Strategies for promoting attendance and punctuality**

- Weekly attendance statistics will be produced for each class and displayed in the entrance hall on the 'Attendance ladder'. Classes compete to be the best class.
- A weekly assembly will highlight attendance and celebrate the winning 'Class of the Week'
- Certificates will be awarded to individual pupils who achieve 100% attendance every term and a trophy for those that achieve 100% for the year. Additional rewards (usually a trip out) will be given to pupils who achieve 99%+ attendance in a year.
- A termly prize (usually a trip out) will be given to the class with the highest attendance.

- Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement and school handbooks
- The Family Support Worker will give a presentation to parents of children coming into Foundation stage, prior to September, outlining the law around attendance and the expectations of the parents to ensure their child attends school regularly in line with Government expectations and the home/school partnership agreement.
- Parents and pupils will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports
- Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality
- All issues, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties, are to be promptly investigated by the school (bullying etc needs to link with behaviour policy and equal opportunities policies)

**This policy will be reviewed to its effective implementation on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.**