



# Nelmes Primary School

## Attendance Policy

Regular school attendance is extremely important. Without it, the efforts of teachers and schools will come to nothing. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Good attendance [over 95%] and academic and social well-being are inextricably linked and with good attendance comes good social and academic progress.

### Reporting Absences

If a child is unfit for school, the parent/carer should contact the school on the first day, in person or by telephone. When the child returns, he or she must bring a written note signed by the parent/carer for each period of absence. Absences will not be authorised without a written explanation. If a child is absent for an extended time without notification then we will call to check why they are still absent. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments that are unavoidably in school time, provided a written explanation is received.

If a child is absent without parental notification then a text will be sent, via the parentmail system, asking them to phone school. If this is not responded to by 9.30am then parents/carers are called and if no response then we go to emergency numbers on list. If no contact can be made after this investigation then a home visit is made.

If a child does not want to attend school for any reason, it is important that parents/carers do not collude with the child by supplying a note stating sickness as a reason for absence. Parents/carers must discuss the problem with the school at the first opportunity and, if it cannot be resolved, a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service.

### What constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence?

Authorised absences are those which the school agree are unavoidable, e.g. illness, family bereavement, etc. and absences for which leave has been given.

**Please note, any absences for five days or more we can request medical evidence. This could also apply if children are regularly absent from school where parents are reporting their children are ill.**

Unauthorised absences are those that the school considers unreasonable, e.g. minor ailments, truancy, excessive lateness, shopping, holidays in term time etc. An absence is unauthorised until an acceptable written explanation is received. If no acceptable explanation is received, in writing, within one month of the absence, the absence will remain unauthorised. It is

for the school, not the parent/carer, to decide whether an absence should be recorded as authorised or unauthorised on receipt of a note. The submission of a note does not automatically register the absence as authorised.

### **Holidays**

Under new DFE legislation as from 1 September 2013, Headteachers **may not grant** any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Family holidays are not regarded as exceptional circumstances, therefore any absence taken for holidays will be subject to a fixed penalty notice.

From

1 September 2013 fines will be as follows:

£60 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 21 days

£120 per child imposed to each parent if paid within 28 days

Again, please note that we will look for medical evidence if children are ill prior or after a holiday, and if a child is not back in school due to a flight delay

Parents/Carers should not ask the children to give a different reason for their absence in order to not report a holiday as this puts all parties in an unfair position.

### **Appointments**

Appointments with the GP or dentist etc. that have to be made during school hours should be notified to the school in writing, in advance. The appointment card or a note is acceptable. Wherever possible, appointments should be made out of school time.

### **Punctuality**

Punctuality is just as important as regular attendance. Even if a child is only 5 late each day they miss the very important introduction to that day's lessons.

### **Informing Parents**

A summary of a child's attendance record is attached to the Annual Report. If a child's attendance is shown to be giving us cause for concern a letter will be written to the parents informing them of this. Often parents can be unaware that a few single days of absence can soon add up. The Head teacher will meet with any parent where there is an attendance issue to identify issues and ways the attendance will improve.

Similarly if a child is persistently late a letter will be written to parents informing them of this. Attendance records are passed onto Secondary school.

If a situation does not improve the Education Welfare Officer will be informed and will probably visit the child's home.

### **Education Welfare Service**

The Education Welfare Service support the school in enforcing school attendance. Each school is allocated an Education Welfare Officer who will liaise with them to ensure attendance meets targets set and will contact parent/carers where there is persistent absence.

### **The Law**

The law states that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that a child attends school regularly and on time. Neglect of this responsibility can result in the prosecution of parents/carers, the penalty for which can be up to a £1000 fine. It is not uncommon now for the parent/carer of a child with persistent absence, or unauthorised holidays, to be served with a penalty notice.

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