



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed March 2017	Review date March 2018
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Rationale

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Purposes

- To have clear, relevant guidelines for keeping registers which are carefully and routinely carried out by staff.
- To ensure that good attendance has a high priority with pupils, parents/carers and teachers.
- To demonstrate clearly stated procedures for swift follow-up when there is a concern about an absence and address patterns of absence.
- To recognize that matters relating to the quality of the curriculum, teaching, the school's ethos and relationships with pupils and parents are most significant in encouraging good attendance.

Rights, responsibilities and roles

School

1. All staff will understand and apply the school's registration process.
2. The school staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absenteeism.
3. All registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.

NB: Incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable as they provide a daily record of attendance which may be required in a Court of Law.

4. The school will ensure that clear attendance information is regularly communicated to parents/carers through a variety of media: the school's website, newsletters, and school prospectus and parents meetings.
5. The school will inform parents regularly of attendance figures and annually of the whole school attendance target via the school website and newsletter.
6. All absenteeism and lateness will be recorded accurately and monitored.
7. All pupils' with attendance below 96% will be monitored on a fortnightly basis by the school, in order to identify persistent absentees and those pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees.
8. The school will have clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness, allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities.
9. The Headteacher and School Leadership Team will analyse attendance data to consider trends and/or patterns and set any action points as necessary.
10. The school will annually review its Attendance Policy and associated procedures in consultation with the Local Authorities Attendance Improvement Service.

Parent(s)/carer(s)

1. Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child regularly attends the school at which they are registered. Failure to fulfill this duty may result in the Local Authority taking legal action.
2. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
3. Parents/carers are responsible for immediately informing the school at which their child is registered of the reason for any absence by phone call text message, letter, email or in person on **every** morning of any absence and thereafter. This should be done before 9.30am.

Authorised/Unauthorised absence

All absences must be explained by a parent/carers. The school will then decide whether or not it will authorise the absence.

Acceptable reasons for the authorisation of absences *may be* as follows:

- Illness (1)
- Exceptional family circumstances such as a bereavement
- Days of religious observance
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (2)

This list is not exhaustive.

(1) Illness

Medical evidence may be requested where a child has been absent for 3 days or more due to illness OR where a child's attendance is below 96% and/or the child is regularly away from school due to illness. Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised. Medical evidence can be in the form of a copy of a prescription, medication or an appointment card showing name of child and date they visited.

If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition, evidence should be provided.

(2) Unavoidable medical/dental appointments

All routine (non-emergency) appointments should be made, whenever possible, outside of school hours. Should a child need to have an appointment during school hours, such as in an emergency, hospital or CAMHS appointment, evidence of this will need to be provided. Failure to provide evidence may result in the school recording the absence as unauthorised.

Holidays in term time/ Leave of absence

Legislation

From the 1st September 2013 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006¹ came into force.

These amendments remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days.

The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Requesting the absence

All requests for a child to be absent from School during term time must be made in writing at least a half term in advance of the proposed absence by completing the absence request form obtainable from Reception.

The Headteacher or person with delegated responsibility will decide whether or not to authorise the absence, on a case by case basis, and will only do so where there are **exceptional circumstances**.

Where a decision is made not to authorise a request for leave of absence, the school will write to the parent(s)/carer(s), notifying them of that decision.

If the absence is unauthorised and still taken, the school may request the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice to the parents/carers for the unauthorised absence.

If no absence request is made

If a child is absent from School during term time and no prior absence request has been made, the School will write to the parents/carers to inform them that the absence has not been authorised and that a Penalty Notice may be issued.

If the parents/carers can demonstrate that the child's absence during this time was due to an **exceptional circumstance** and that an absence request could not have been made in advance of the said absence, then a Penalty Notice will not be issued.

Please be aware:

Parents/carers who take their child out of school without prior written authorisation from the school may be subject to a £60 penalty notice per child, per parent from the Local Authority.

Parents/carers from 1st September 2013 must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days.

Nonpayment of the penalty within those timescales may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates Court under s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child. A 'parent' can be any person, whether a natural parent or not, who has care of the child or young person.

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

First day reporting

- On the first day of any absence the parent/carer should ring school before 09:30am to inform the school that their child will be absent from school and give a reason for that absence. An indication of the likely period of absence is to be requested.
- Admin staff must keep a log of absence calls and reasons received each day.
- Registration marks must be made available immediately after registration in order that where necessary; any absenteeism can be followed up by admin staff.
- If any member of staff is concerned about an absence, the concerns will be raised with attendance/administrative staff to clarify any reasons or knowledge of the absence. If there are still concerns they should be passed to the Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher or Pastoral Lead Teacher.
- Between 09:15am – 10:15am school will send a “text” to the parents of any pupils whose absence is unexplained. If no response has been received by 11.00am the school will contact other emergency contacts.
- If the school has concerns about the child's whereabouts and wellbeing, the school will contact the Torbay Education Safeguarding Service (TESS) for advice.

- It remains the schools responsibility to try to contact the parent and visit the home if necessary.
- If after 10 days, the child has continued unauthorised absence, a Child Missing Education (CME) referral will be made to the Attendance Improvement Service.

If the child is subject to a child protection plan or if the school has particular safeguarding concerns and feel the child is at risk of immediate harm, the school will immediately notify the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) without waiting for 10 schools days.

A child may be referred to the MASH if it is considered that they have totally disengaged from learning and/or the parent is subject to statutory intervention.

Lateness

There are two negative results caused by children who constantly arrive late. These are:

- The loss of education suffered by the child which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time at school.
- The disruption to other children in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task at hand.

The strategies that the school will use to tackle lateness will include:

1. School gates will be locked promptly before School day is due to start. Pupils who arrive after 8:55am are considered 'Late' (L) and will be required to enter the school via reception to sign in and record the reason for their late arrival.
2. Children who arrive after 09:10am should be considered as 'Late (after registers close)' (U).
3. Registration staff will record the appropriate late mark in the registers and these will be entered into the computerised attendance programme.

4. All pupils' attendance records will be checked every two weeks for lates before registers close (L) and lates after registers close (U).
5. Where either/or these late arrivals cumulate to 5 or more in a half term the school will write to parents/carers of the pupil in question to discuss any support needs and ways of accessing support.

Attendance letters

Where a child's attendance falls below 96%, the following actions should be taken:

Attendance letter 1 will be sent advising the parent that their child's attendance has dropped below 96%.

Attendance letter 2 will be sent out if attendance does not improve, inviting parents/carers into a meeting with the Pastoral Lead Teacher.

Attendance letter 3 will be sent if parents/carers do not attend the meeting and/or there is still no improvement following letters 1 and 2, inviting parents/carers into a meeting with the Headteacher.

Attendance

If, at any time, a child has 10 or more unauthorised absences equating to 10% within a 6 months period, the school should attend a legal consultation with the Local Authority to consider legal options available. Legal options include: Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders, School Attendance Orders and Prosecution. Please see the Local Authority website for further details.

Strategies for promoting attendance:

- Weekly attendance chart in assembly
- Highest class attendance of the week
- Termly certificates for the highest class attendance
- Termly certificates for children achieving 100% attendance
- Highlighting positive attendance in Newsletters, parents evening, assemblies and on an individual basis.