



## **Pupil Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

Date: September 2017  
Responsibility: Mr Jamie Nairn (Headteacher)

Notified to Governors: October 2017  
Review Date: September 2019

## **Introduction**

In order for children to progress well and achieve their full potential it is essential that they regularly attend school and that they are punctual. We expect pupils to attend school for every session and consider regular attendance to be 96% or better over the course of the academic year.

This policy is based on the School attendance regulations which came into effect from 1st September 2013 under Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which amends the existing 2006 regulations.

### **The school expects children to:**

- attend school regularly;
- arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day;
- speak to their parent/carers if issues arise that may have an impact on their attendance.

### **The school expects parents/carers to:**

- ensure their children to attend school regularly;
- contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child will be absent (ideally by no later than 9.30 am on the first day of absence) giving details of the reason for absence and the anticipated length of time the child will be absent;
- ensure their child arrives on time (between 8:45 and 8:55) and appropriately prepared for the day, including having the correct equipment (clothing appropriate to the weather conditions; PE kit; completed homework etc);
- talk to their child's class teacher in the first instance if a problem occurs or there is a change in family circumstances that may affect the child's attendance;
- not book holidays during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances;
- co-operate and participate in interventions and support offered by school or other agencies where there is a need to support their child's attendance.

### **Children and parents/carers can expect the school to:**

- provide clear procedures for reporting absences upon admission to the school and otherwise as changes occur;
- regularly, efficiently and accurately record attendance;
- deal with requests for absence in a fair and consistent manner;
- monitor the attendance levels of all children, identifying and supporting children with less than 96% attendance;
- contact parent/carers from 9.30am on the first day of absence and every subsequent day where no reason for absence has been provided;
- make a home visit if no contact is established;
- call Northamptonshire Police/Children's Social Services if no contact or response is forthcoming;

- take prompt and appropriate action on any problems notified to the school;
- encourage good attendance through positive strategies;
- report to the government through the school's census on attendance three times a year.

### **Procedures and processes for monitoring attendance**

Class teachers take a register of attendance every day, twice a day. They take them at 8:55am and 1:00pm.

A member of the office will identify any children who are absent and check this against the messages received from parents and carers.

If no message has been received by 9:30, then a text message will be sent to the parents/carers mobile telephones.

If, by 10:30, no message is received, a member of the office will telephone the parent/carer.

If there is no response, they will then pass this onto a member of the senior leadership team who will then attempt to make contact with the family, involving if necessary a home visit.

The school will collate instances of absence and lateness, analysing these weekly. Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school may carry out the following procedures:

- initiate verbal contact with home to offer support;
- if attendance does not continue to improve, the school will write to the parent/carers outlining the concerns and indicating targets to improve within a fixed time period;
- if the previous procedures do not result in an improvement, then a meeting will be arranged with a member of the senior leadership team and the parent/carers where a parenting contract will be put in place to support improvements;
- if the parenting contract is successful, then no further action will be taken and the school will continue to monitor the child's attendance as normal. If the contract is unsuccessful, then the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority to deal with the on-going issues, which may result in parents being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### **Punctuality**

School doors open at 8:45 for children to enter their classrooms. The doors will close at 8:55 and the teachers will then take the registers. If a child arrives after 8:55 but before 9:00, they will be marked as late but before the register has closed. If they arrive after 9:00 they will be marked as late after the register has closed. This counts as an unauthorised absence.

If a child receives 10 or more of these late after the register has closed, the school will refer the parents to the Local Authority who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## **Absences during term time**

As a result of the legislation Headteachers will no longer be able to allow any absence for the purpose of a holiday during term time. Any holiday in term time will be treated as unauthorised.

The regulations do allow Headteachers to authorise absence during term time in “exceptional circumstances”. Please find below a list of examples of allowable absences and those which will now be classed as unauthorised absences.

### **Allowed absence**

- Sickness/illness
- Emergency and planned medical appointments  
(Parents are requested to make to make routine appointments outside school hours)
- Hospital scheduled appointments /treatment
- Day/s for specific religious observance
- School is closed due to unforeseen circumstances

### **Allowed absence in exceptional circumstances (Please remember these are at the discretion of the headteacher and in advance of the event, and evidence may be required to prove the event)**

- Family bereavement or close friend bereavement
- Family wedding/civil partnership taking part on school day. (The school will only grant travel days if the wedding is abroad).
- Family crisis
- Examinations off site
- Educational Opportunity – Sport & Performance
- Visit to a new school
- Family re-location visit

### **Absences not allowed under any circumstances**

- Family holiday no matter what length
- Family trips
- Leaving school early to travel to an event

## **Requests for Absence**

All requests for absence due to exceptional circumstances must be made by completing the ‘Request for Absence in term time’ form which can be downloaded from our school website. The headteacher will then review each request and decide if it meets the criteria for authorisation. Parents should keep their copy of the authorisation in case they are required to prove their child has authorised absence during term time.

## **Penalty Notices**

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.

- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

“If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence.” The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- ‘parent’ includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

We hope that parents will understand that schools are bound by the changes in government legislation and make every effort to comply with the attendance regulations.

### **Procedures for Notifying Absence**

If a child is absent from school for illness or for an emergency then parents are asked to telephone the school early in the morning on the first day of absence or send a message into school with a responsible adult. A written communication is required on the pupil’s return giving the duration and reason for the absence.

Failure to communicate reasons for absence will result in the child’s record being marked as an unauthorised absence. The school determines whether or not an absence is authorised.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A child becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ when they miss 10% or more schooling. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects and we need parents/carers fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

Absence is thoroughly monitored on a weekly basis. Any child thought to be persistently absent or likely to be persistently absent will be closely monitored from week to week. Standard procedures for monitoring attendance will apply. However the school will consider each case on an individual basis and decide the appropriate course of action.