

Policy for Attendance Management

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Governor Responsibility:	Learning & Community Committee
Policy Originator:	Headteacher
Review Period:	Bi-annual
Status:	
Reviewed:	Summer 2017
Next Review Date:	Summer 2019
Governor Signature	

INTRODUCTION

At Tetherdown Primary School we seek to ensure that all pupils receive a high quality, appropriate education in a safe and caring environment to enable all pupils to reach their full potential.

All members of the school community (including parents/carers and pupils) will be involved in encouraging full school attendance so that all pupils are able to access all of the opportunities available to them during the primary phase of their education.

PRINCIPLES

- The Education Act 1996, section 7 states that, ***“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.***
- It is important that school staff, pupils, parents and carers value excellent school attendance and punctuality. Staff and parents/carers should be aware of their rights and responsibilities with regard to the attendance of pupils.

PURPOSE OF THE ATTENDANCE POLICY

- To improve and maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- To minimise disruption to the learning environment caused by lateness and absence and to maximise pupils' educational opportunities.
- To provide a framework with defined and agreed roles and responsibilities which identifies support, guidance and consistency in the area of school attendance.
- To monitor and respond to variance as and when appropriate.
- *To ensure efficient and effective communication between school, home and Local Authority.*

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that, 'If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.'
- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent or carer does not in itself authorise an absence. Authorisation for absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher once he is satisfied with the validity of the explanation offered for the absence.
- The keeping of accurate registers is required by law. Registration must take place twice each day: once at the beginning of the day, and once during the afternoon.

**SEE LOCAL AUTHORITY ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES
FOR FURTHER ADVICE AND GUIDANCE**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Improving and maintaining good school attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the school community.

1. The Headteacher will:

- ensure that manual and electronic registers are kept accurately in accordance with legislation and that electronic registers are updated regularly. See attendance procedures and guidance for schools;
- oversee the authorisation of all absences and where there is any doubt about authorising an absence, the Headteacher will clarify this;
- ensure that an accurate daily record of lateness is recorded on the electronic registers daily;
- ensure that the importance of good school attendance and punctuality and the expectations of this are featured in the school information pack and are communicated to parents and carers of pupils at the school regularly;
- send appropriate letters to parents/carers and / or meet with parents/carers if a pupil's absence gives cause for concern;
- ensure that where a pupil's attendance has deteriorated and is below 90% referrals are made promptly in line with LA and DfE guidance and legislation on the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) form;
- ensure that leave during term-time will only be authorised under exceptional circumstances. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis, taking into consideration
 - i. the effect the absence will have on his/her education and ability to achieve;
 - ii. the child's previous attendance record, previous leave during term time
 - iii. the child's welfare
 - iv. other circumstances surrounding the child's education at this school
- communicate decisions to parents in writing. An unexplained absence of longer than two weeks may lead to removal from the school roll (follow LA guidance)
- designate a member of staff to meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer for the school and to represent the school in meetings regarding attendance with parents and other professionals. This member of staff will be in a position to feedback to the Headteacher appropriately so that strategic decisions may be taken.
- set aspirational attendance targets for the school each academic year informed by analysis of the school's attendance data and in agreement with the Local Authority.

2. The Class Teacher will:

- keep an accurate record of attendance and absence in accordance with LA and DfE guidance;
- alert the Headteacher to any pupils about whom they have concerns regarding their school attendance and punctuality;
- monitor the attendance of pupils in the class and follow up reasons for absences promptly;
- talk to parents as soon as concerns arise about attendance and punctuality and discuss attendance with parents and carers at Parent Consultations;
- take the register at 9.00 am to ensure consistency of registration across the school and close the register promptly after registration at 9.15 am.
- take the register for the afternoon session at 1.10pm (close at 1.20pm) for junior children and 1.25pm (close at 1.35pm) for infant children;
- encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality

3. Senior Leaders will:

- promote excellent school attendance through assemblies;
- use the newsletter to remind parents / carers of the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality.

4. The Admin & Attendance Assistant will:

- update attendance and absence data accurately and promptly from manual registers to electronic registers;

- code absences in collaboration with the Headteacher and in line with the DfE codes (Appendix 1);
- record messages left regarding children's absence in the register accordingly, including, where illness is cited as the reason, the nature of the illness;
- monitor the late book effectively and will record the time of arrival of pupils, the reason for their late arrival, their name and class;
- transfer information from the late book to the registers;
- operate First Day Calling for pupils who are absent from school where a parent/carer has not contacted the school regarding their absence and will keep a log of these calls;
- liaise with the Headteacher regarding punctuality issues and respond according to agreed procedures: parents will be informed by the class teacher in the first instance through verbal conversation. If no improvement is evident systems will be put into place to encourage improvement and parents contacted in writing.

5. The Education Welfare Service will:

- meet with the school regularly and discuss open cases of concern, all pupils with attendance of 90% or below and pupils whose attendance is beginning to cause concern;
- support the school to identify poor patterns of attendance through data provided by the school, for individual pupils and cohorts of pupils e.g. by gender, ethnicity, year group and at whole school level and help them to implement strategies to address these;
- support staff in the development of whole school approaches to maintain and develop excellent attendance and punctuality;
- assist those families who are experiencing difficulties with school attendance through offering parenting advice, signposting to other agencies and working within a multi-agency framework;
- carry out attendance clinic meetings with parents/carers to alert them to the concerns relating to poor attendance and advise them of their legal responsibilities prior to them being referred to EWS, where the school's attempts to improve attendance of individual pupils have failed;
- progress all referrals for poor school attendance, in line with the service level agreement, through the fast track to attendance scheme (if appropriate). This will include legal action where necessary.

6. Parents / Carers are expected to:

- ✓ bring their child to school by 8.50am and by 1.10pm for junior children and 1.25pm for infant children;
- ✓ notify the school immediately from the first day of their child's absence by telephone;
- ✓ avoid making routine medical / dental appointments during the school day where possible;
- ✓ provide copies of appointment cards and letters to the school for absences;
- ✓ ensure that their child is prepared for school so that they arrive at school on time every day;
- ✓ impress upon their child the importance of attending school every day;
- ✓ apply to the Headteacher using the **absence request** form (Appendix 2), for any leave of absence within the school term (except official school visits to Fortismere Secondary School). Holidays in term time are not an entitlement;
- ✓ inform the school and /or the EWO if they are having trouble ensuring their child's regular attendance at school;
- ✓ collect (or arrange collection of) their child promptly at the end of the school day, including After School Club.

7. Pupils will:

- ✓ be made aware of the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school;
- ✓ be supported and encouraged by staff to arrive on time and regularly to school;
- ✓ be encouraged to talk to a member of school staff if there is anything which makes them feel unhappy at school and could reduce their willingness to attend.