



# Attendance Policy

Reviewed June 2024

This policy reflects the vision and aims of the School by:

- encouraging staff, parents and pupils to maximise the learning experience in order that all pupils can reach their full potential
- providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

## **Principals**

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment and future success depends on good attendance allowing each pupil to experience the full school offer.

We expect all school personnel to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel safe and valued and enjoy coming to school.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

## **Aims**

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To work with our other schools to share good practice in order to improve practice and policy.

## **Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure**

### **Role of the Proprietor and Governing Body**

The Proprietor and Governing Body will:

- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
  - nominate a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Coordinator and to report back to the Governing Body;
  - ensure that the attendance policy is carried out;
  - ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
  - monitor termly progress;
  - take responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
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- take responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;

### **Role of the Headteacher (who is also DSL)**

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure the 'Pupil concerns list' is up to date and accurate and is known by the key staff;
- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance via the 'First Day Contact' approach by using the appropriate and effective registration system;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals and special educational needs;
- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders or have been highlighted through monitoring and data analysis around attendance;
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- report the attendance figures and progress to the Governing Body;
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;

- introduce rewards and incentives to encourage punctuality to lessons and positive attendance;
  - organise training for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;
  - work closely with the link governor and First Day Contact person – school administrator;
  - Work closely with the pastoral team who will have the role of family liaison for those pupils who struggle to maintain high attendance
  - monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
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- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy.

### **Role of the School Office/ Administration Staff**

The office personnel are responsible for:

- implementing the policy with the Headteacher;
  - monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
  - keeping the Headteacher informed of attendance figures and trends;
  - contacting parents regarding concerns about their child's attendance – 'First Day Response' call
  - Liaise with pastoral team leader who will then contact /arrange home visits for any pupils where there is cause for concern
  - compiling attendance data for the Headteacher, the Governing Body and the EWO;
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- ensuring registers are completed in a timely way and are kept up to date

### **Role of the First Day Contact Person (School Administrator)**

The First Day Contact person is responsible for:

- contacting parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 9-30 a.m;
  - note if any of those who have not arrived in school are on the 'concerns list'- liaise with pastoral lead;
  - sending an email/ text/ letter if no contact is made;
  - continuing to contact the parents throughout the day until contact is made;
  - contacting the key worker if a child is on the school's pupil concerns list and no reason has been given for the child's absence;
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- informing the Headteacher of trends in absence.

## **Role of School Personnel**

School personnel will:

- comply with and implement this policy
  - set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
  - ensure that registers are taken at the appropriate times and are accurate and up to date;
  - monitor class and individual attendance patterns;
  - inform the school office of any concerns about attendance;
  - emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance;
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- discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations

## **Role of the Nominated Governor**

The Nominated Governor will:

- work closely with the Headteacher and the coordinator;
  - ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
  - ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
  - report to the Governing Body every term;
  - annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy
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## **Role of Parents**

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
  - informing the school on the first day of absence;
  - informing the school of any changes to their contact details;
  - collecting their children on time;
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- supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school;

## Role of Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- arriving at school on time;
- knowing the value of good attendance;
- taking part in questionnaires and surveys.

## Dealing with Trends in Attendance

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- parents are invited to attend an informal meeting with the Coordinator/Headteacher to explain their child's repeated absence;
- support will be offered if there are underlying reasons for the absence;
- if not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement;
- if there is no improvement then appropriate action will be taken.

## Dealing with Lateness

The office personnel and teaching staff monitor lateness and inform:

- the Headteacher of patterns of lateness;
- parents of the school's concerns.

## Absence

**Holidays during term time** – only in exceptional circumstances will the school agree to a leave of absence in term time. Parents are asked to complete a holiday form requesting permission to take their child on holiday.

**Religious Observance** – a maximum of three days absence is allowed for religious observance.

**Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments** – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education.

## Raising Awareness of this Policy

We will raise awareness of this policy via:

- the school website
  - meetings with parents such as introductory, transition, parent-teacher consultations and periodic curriculum workshops
  - school events
  - meetings with school personnel
  - communications with home such as weekly newsletters and of end of half term newsletters
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- Headteacher reports to the Governing Body

## **Pupils who struggle to attend school**

Pupils are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

If there are any concerns it is always best to work with the school staff to try to resolve the issues to then support the pupil to attend school well

## **Authorised and Unauthorised absence**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.**

**Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.**

**This includes:**

- 👤 **parents keeping pupils off school unnecessarily**
- 👤 **truancy before or during the school day**
- 👤 **absences which have never been properly explained**

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Placing Local Authority (if appropriate the Social Worker).

It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

### **All other absences and holiday requests**

DfE regulations regarding absence no longer permit holidays to be taken during term time. Headteachers are not to authorise any leave or absence from school unless the circumstances are 'exceptional' relating to a 'one off' isolated situation. Any such request must be submitted in good time in writing

### **Information about individual school targets**

The school has adopted the following attendance targets:

Any attendance which falls below 95% is enough to set off initial concerns records. Attendance of less than 90% should become a cause for concern.