



'Valuing Learning, Learning to Value'

## Attendance Policy

### Policy status

Recommended

At Yorkley Primary School we believe that pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education and achieve their potential.

This attendance policy sets out what is expected so that this may be achieved.

### THE LAW

The law says that:

- Parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their children receive suitable full time education;
- That Local Authorities must ensure that parents fulfil their legal obligations regarding their children's education;
- Maintained schools must allow the LA to inspect their registers
- Schools must report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly. Gloucestershire's Penalty Notice protocol allows schools to notify the LA of any pupil having more than 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence in a ten week period particularly when this absence is on account of:
  - (a) Lateness after registration;
  - (b) Term time holidays without permission

In these instances the LA will consider issuing a fixed penalty notice of £60.

Unauthorised absence may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

Formal meetings (Attendance Improvement Meetings) will be held with parents whose children's poor attendance may lead to legal proceedings and attendance plans will be drawn up.

### RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/carers should:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed and equipped and in a fit state to learn.
- Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available help or support can be offered.
- Let the school know, by telephoning before 9.30 a.m., on the first day of absence from school, why their child is absent and when they are expected to return.

- Where possible seek permission from school prior to any absence.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.
- Notify school if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

School will:

- Make suitable arrangements for the safe, daily reception of children.
- Be consistent in their attendance practices.
- Keep and mark registers accurately.
- Follow up any unexplained absences.
- Notify parents/carers, at least annually, of their child's attendance level.
- Notify the Local Authority (LA) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or are excluded.
- Notify the LA and/or the Department for Education of absence figures for the school and, where necessary, individual pupils.

The Head teacher will:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a priority.
- Write to all families whose children come under the category 'persistently absent'
- Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents at least annually of attendance procedures.
- Carry out attendance meetings either on school site or through home visits.
- Oversee attendance procedures and attendance data.

Governors will:

- With the Head teacher, monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures regularly.
- Report on attendance statistics when required.

## **SCHOOL TIMES**

We require children to be at school by 8.50a.m. for juniors, 9.00a.m. for infants in time for the start of morning registration.

School finishes at 3.00pm

Children should be collected promptly unless they are attending an after school activity. Please inform the school office as soon as possible if you are going to be late collecting your child for any reason.

## REGISTRATION

School must keep attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. The class teacher will call the register twice a day and every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site. It must be shown, by the use of approved codes, whether an absence is authorised or not.

Registration for KS2 will take place between 8.50 a.m. and 9.00 a.m. for the morning session.

For KS1 it will take place between 9.00 a.m. and 9.10a.m for the morning session.

Pupils arriving after registration will be marked late.

Pupils arriving after 9.10 (juniors) 9.20 (infants) will be marked with an unauthorised absence mark unless there is an acceptable reason for lateness when they will be marked with an authorised absence mark.

Registers will be marked again during afternoon sessions.

The marking of registers will be in accordance with instructions set out at the front of the register.

Absence, legally, has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised and reported on to the DfE / LA. Only the schools can decide whether an absence is authorised or not and does not have to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

## SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Registers will be returned to the office and checked after close of registration.

Where the register shows an unexplained absence and there has been no message received at school by 9.30 a.m. a phone call will be made to the parent/carers to find out the reason for absence and the date of expected return. All telephone messages will be dated and recorded in writing.

If school has been unable to make contact by telephone a written communication will be sent on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence, requesting the reason for absence. If there is still no response the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where the register shows 5 separate late during or after registration marks over a school half term, school will contact parents.

Where the register shows 10 separate late after registration marks over the last 10 weeks the Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty notice. A written warning will no longer be issued, in the first instance, by the school.

Concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the head teacher who will, if necessary, contact parents/carers to try to resolve any issues. If these issues cannot be resolved and there is unauthorised absence the matter may be referred ultimately to the Education Entitlement and Exclusion Team at Shire Hall.

## ABSENCES

### ILLNESS

It is realised that a child may be absent from school because of genuine illness. In such cases absence will be authorised. However, patterns of frequent or repeated sporadic absence will be followed up by the school initially, with the LA becoming involved as appropriate and when necessary.

### MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

Please try to make appointments outside school hours if at all possible. However, if this is not possible we ask for copies of appointments cards/letters. Parents will need to collect their child(ren) from school.

### LONGER ABSENCES

Suitable work will be set for pupils who are absent for longer than a week when requested by the parents/carers.

**UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE** All absences will be deemed unauthorised until the school decides otherwise, based on the information provided by the parent or carer.

### SCHOOL CLOSURE

In the event that the school is closed at the heads discretion, absences will be recorded as authorised. e.g. adverse weather, no running water/heating.

## HOLIDAYS

### HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

The law (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) states that parents/carers do not have a right to take their child(ren) out of school for a holiday in term time. The Education (Penalty Notice) Regulations 2007 further strengthen the duty on LAs and schools to address the issue of non-attendance robustly.

For every application made by the parent/carers with whom the pupil normally lives, the head teacher has a **discretionary power** to grant up to five days of absence in a school year for a family holiday if they believe that the circumstances are truly exceptional and warrant it. No parent/carers can demand leave of absence for a holiday as a right.

Head teachers are permitted to agree "holiday leave" only in infrequent and exceptional circumstances, such as:

- For service personnel and other parents/carers who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time by their employers
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

If the parent/carer keeps a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised.

Each individual case will be considered sensitively to ensure that the best interests of the child(ren) are met. It is a condition of such authorised absence that suitable work will be done by the child(ren) while they are missing school. This will be set by the Head teacher.

Holidays requested for the following reasons will not normally be authorised:

- The availability of cheap holidays or flights
- The availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced during school holiday periods
- An overlap with the beginning or end of term
- In addition, holidays will not be authorised during examination times

If the parent/carer wishes to apply for permission from the Head teacher, a holiday form must be completed in advance. Holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the school does not agree an absence and the pupil does not attend school during the dates requested, the absence will be unauthorised.

If a holiday request is refused but the holiday is still taken, action will be taken immediately, as outlined above, to address the abuse of trust. All unauthorised absence will be examined and the appropriate action will be taken following Government/LA guidelines which will/can result in a penalty notice being issued to each parent and for each child.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

If appointments have to be made during school hours, school should be pre-notified. Parents collecting pupils from school mid-session should, for safety reasons, notify the office on departure and re-arrival. If present at registration no amendment to the register is necessary. If absent at registration the register should be marked with an authorised absence mark. Again for safety reasons, pupils should report to the office on arrival.

## **FREQUENT ABSENCES FOR MEDICAL REASONS**

When a pupil frequently misses school for medical reasons, medical services may be consulted and appointment cards will need to be provided. Where necessary a referral will be made so that an evaluation of the pupils health and educational needs can be made.

## **LONGER ABSENCES**

Pupils who have been absent for a long period of time will be positively welcomed back and will be assisted in catching up with missed work. Friendship groups will be monitored for a period to ensure that the pupil is happily settled back into school life.

## **STRATEGIES**

To support our attendance policy we:

- Will treat attendance as a priority
- Promote good attendance at every opportunity - at Parents evenings, at Induction, in newsletters, in assemblies, on notice boards etc
- Always use first day telephone contact
- Celebrate good and improved attendance
- Set attendance targets - 100%
- Keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance level
- Make good use of attendance data by specific analysis
- Notify Governors at each full governing body meeting of attendance levels
- Provide a safe, happy, stimulating environment for children where they feel valued and welcomed and that their presence in school is important

## **SUCCESS CRITERIA**

- We are meeting or exceeding our attendance targets.
- Our attendance is in line with, or exceeds that of local comparator schools.
- We have positive feedback from outside agencies such as Ofsted, LA etc.
- Everybody is clear about what to do if a child is absent from school.

## **Links with other policies:**

Teaching and Learning

Safeguarding

Behaviour, Rewards and Sanctions

Exclusions

## **Policy Review**

Written by: **K.Burke**

Agreed by Governors; **January 2018** Date for review; **January 2019**