



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Principles

It is a well established principle that attendance is linked to achievement in school. Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents 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. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Attendance policies must include procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more, where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Service.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, either via telephone or in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or another 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 children off school unnecessarily**
- **truancy before or during the school day**
- **absences which have never been properly explained**
- **children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**
- **holidays during term time that have not been authorised**

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always

successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWW themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty not to discriminate against people on the basis of their age, disability, gender, gender identity, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

If a child is absent, parents should contact the school on the first day of the absence via telephone stating a reason. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence. If authorisation were to be refused, for instance if a child was kept off school for a birthday, then the parents would be informed. Parents should continue to contact the school daily until the child has returned to school.

- If no contact, explaining the child's absence, fails to be made by parents or carers, by 10am, then the school would contact the home by telephone on the initial day. By contacting the parent the school also ensures that the parent is aware their child is not in school. This will enable them, where necessary, to establish that their child is safe.
- In the event of any child who is on the "At Risk" register and does not appear at school, the school must contact Staffordshire First Response team.

Leave of Absence

Requests for a leave of absence during term time should be submitted to the Headteacher in writing. A form is available from the office. Authorisation will only be given when there is proof of an exceptional circumstance. Financial savings cannot be considered as an

exceptional circumstance. The overlapping of holidays into the beginning or end of a school term is also not an exceptional circumstance.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away (often whole units of work), they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which in the child's interest, must be avoided. There are 190 statutory school days a year; so there are 175 other days (weekends and school holidays) available for holidays, which would not have a negative effect on your child's education.

Parents may receive a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority for taking their child out of school during term time without consent from the school. From September 2013 these Notices cost £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

Lateness

- School begins at 8.55 a.m. and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Any child arriving later than 8.55 a.m. should enter school via the rear entrance and report to the School Office before going to the cloakroom or classroom. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register.
- School Registers close at 9.10 a.m. Arrival after this time will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, further action may be taken. Penalty notices will be issued for persistent late arrival at school.

Summary of what can parents do to help

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away.
- Try to make medical appointments outside school time.
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.
- Ensure your child is punctual for the start of the school day.

If you are worried about your child's attendance at school what can you do?

- Talk to your child; it may be something simple.
- Talk to the Headteacher and staff at the school.

If it continues....

- The school may refer to the Education Welfare Service.
- You may contact the Education Welfare Worker, who will work with you and the school to resolve the situation; the number is available from the School Office.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 87% in any term without good reason, a referral to the EWW will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

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

Information about individual school targets and initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance target: 97% attendance for the academic year 2014-15.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Procter

Office Manager: Mrs Jane Cooper (first point of contact)

Class teachers will monitor attendance and report concerns to the Headteacher. In cases where children are reluctant to come to school because of teasing or bullying, the situation will be dealt with promptly in line with the school Anti-bullying Policy. Good attendance will be rewarded with a 100% certificate at the end of each term.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Monitoring and review

We are aware of the need to monitor and update the school's attendance policy on a regular basis, so that we can take account of changes in statutory guidance and law. We will therefore review this policy in two years, or earlier if necessary.

Headteacher:	<i>H Procter</i>	Date:	30/4/15
Chair of Governing Body:	<i>Ann Spilsbury</i>	Date:	30/4/15

