



## Attendance/Authorised Absence Policy (for Pupils)

<u>Date of Policy:</u>	October 2013	<u>Reviewed:</u> July 2017
<u>To Be Reviewed:</u>	July 2020	
<u>Designated Person:</u>	Deputy Headteacher (Andrew Tomsett)	

### Introduction

Pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless there is a good reason for their absence. There are two categories of absence:

- Authorised - where the school approves the absence, which falls into the Attendance Code Category set by the Department of Education.
- Unauthorised - where the school has not received a reason for absence or will not approve the absence.

Registration is taken twice daily, in the first morning session and after lunch in the first afternoon session.

### Notification

If a pupil is absent, parents should call the school on the first day of the absence stating the reason and the expected date of return. Should the absence continue longer than the expected date of return, the parent should keep the school informed. If the parent has not already notified the school of the reason for the absence, a note should be sent on the day the child returns to school stating the reason for the absence.

If the absence falls into one of the official categories of the attendance codes, this will be an authorised absence. However, if contact explaining the child's absence fails to be made by parents or carers then the administration team will contact the home by telephone on the initial day of absence. If the school is unable to contact parents on the day a code of N will be entered which indicates that no reason has yet been provided for the absence. This will be followed up by the administration team and if no reason is given this will then be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

### What can parents do to help?

- Let the school know as soon as possible why their child is not at school.
- If unable to contact on the day, send a note when your child returns to school.
- Where possible try to make any appointments outside of school time.
- Wherever possible do not allow your child to needlessly have time off school.

### Impact of Health on Attendance and Returning to School After a Long Illness

As a special school some of our pupils may have serious health issues as part of their condition. Wherever possible we will adapt practice to enable attendance.

We all realise that returning to school following a period of absence can be very difficult for some pupils, whatever the reason for their absence. In these situations school staff will plan carefully with parents/carers, together with any relevant agencies, about how best to support the pupil's return to school. In some cases it may be appropriate to have a phased return to school life for a short period. Where

absence is long term due to exceptional health issues, we will keep in touch weekly and in consultation with parents/carers, may put forward a referral for home tuition.

### **Completing the Register**

The marking of registers can become so routine that the importance of accuracy and regularity can be forgotten. However, incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are documents that may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school. They also contribute to pupil's end of term reports and to records of achievement. For these reasons registers are required to be marked in ink so as not easily erased, and all alterations should be visible and explained. Codes are given inside the front cover of the register; if in doubt speak to the Office Manager/School Administrator.

### **Late Arrivals**

All pupils should arrive at school for the start of the day. Registration is left open until 9.30am to allow for parents who are bringing their child to school extra time in case of particular difficulties. After this, a late mark will be given, however if a different reason is stated when the parent comes in, the late mark will be changed to reflect this e.g. medical appointment.

### **Family Holidays During Term Time**

Parents are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday, but if exceptional circumstances are given, the school may choose to grant leave of absence for up to 10 days **within the academic year**. Only in the most unusual and extreme of exceptional circumstances will an absence of more than 10 days be authorised. All such cases must be discussed with the Headteacher, as a pupil who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll.

In considering whether or not to authorise leave for a family holiday the school will be able to refer parents to the local authority for action if children are taken out of school to go on holiday for five consecutive days or more during term time. The School will consider each case individually, taking into account a pupil's overall attendance and the exceptional reasons stated. Leave of absence forms for pupils can be obtained from the school office and all requests must be submitted to the school office at least two weeks before the first day of intended absence.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt the continuity of learning. Not only do pupils miss the teaching and therapies provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the subsequent lessons following their return.

### **Monitoring**

Individual pupil attendance is monitored and reported on end of year reports and at half-termly meetings between Deputy Headteacher and Heads of Departments.

If a pupil is identified as a persistent absentee, that is attendance less than 85%, then parents will be consulted by Head of Department and wherever appropriate an agreed plan put in place to improve attendance.

At the end of each academic year a whole school pupil attendance will be reported to governors.