



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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**Date:** December 2016

## **Attendance Policy Statement:**

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in certain cases.

The Acorns Primary & Nursery & Whitley Village Federated School aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parent(s)/carer(s), local community, the Education Improvement Partnership and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage good attendance and will liaise with home and partner agencies if this is appropriate. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such by the school. The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

## **Aims:**

- To improve the quality of school life
- To create a culture in which good attendance is 'normality'
- To demonstrate to pupils, parent(s)/carer(s) and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good regular attendance is an achievement in itself
- To be consistent in implementation, both in terms of rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive

## **Objectives:**

- To involve the children in their school attendance
- To improve communication with parent(s)/carer(s) about regular school attendance
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for children or young people's attendance
- To recognise the important role of Upper Pay Scale teacher with 'Attendance' as a responsibility and Family Liaison Officers in promoting and monitoring good attendance
- To ensure time and organisation within the school to enable the aims and objectives to be met
- Effective working relationship with Education Welfare Service, and the reporting of half-termly figures to the service

## **Targets:**

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
- To discuss the setting of targets for the school with the Education Welfare Officer
- To ensure that such data is available and used effectively by school managers and staff in conjunction with the EWO
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors and record these where appropriate
- To target resources in order to improve attendance and implement strategies where most appropriate and to undertake this within a reasonable time frame
- To keep parent(s)/carer(s), pupils and governors, the Education Improvement Partnership and the Local Authority informed of policy and practice
- To ensure that the school is aware of government targets which may have been set for some vulnerable groups, such as Looked After Children

## Procedure

- Children or young people are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence. There are two types of absence:
  - - Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence)
  - - Unauthorised (where the school will not approve absence)
- It is expected that parent(s) or carers will provide an explanation if the child or young person is absent on every day the absence occurs, at the start of the school day by 9.30am.
- If contact, explaining the child or young person's absence, fails to be made by parent(s) or carer/s, then the school will attempt to contact the home. If contact is not made, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Frequent occurrences may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.
- The Executive Headteacher will regularly remind parent(s)/carer(s) of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Children or young people with 100% attendance will be recognised by the school termly and given appropriate reward (also see Behaviour Policy).

## Identification & Referral

- Identification is made by the class teacher or Family Liaison Officers.
- Concerns are relayed to the parent(s)/carer(s) verbally and/or by letter
- Following this letter, there will be monitoring of the child's attendance
- If there is no or insufficient improvement, at this point, a further letter may be sent and parent(s)/carer(s) can be invited in for a meeting
- If there is no improvement, consideration will be given regarding a referral to the Education Welfare Service
- Parental duty will be re-enforced to ensure full school attendance and offer support by providing links to other agencies as appropriate
- A referral to the Education Welfare Service will consist of the referral form, copies of all correspondence to parent(s)/carer(s) and a print out of the child or young person's attendance certificate.

## Completing the Register

- Registers provide the twice daily record of the attendance of all pupils; they are legal documents **that may be required in a court of law**, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance at school
- The register should be marked using the codes advised by DfE and Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Schools are responsible to ensure that storage of information complies with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998
- Electronic registers have to be backed up on external servers at least once a week. **These are legal documents.**

## Lateness

Pupils who are late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. School begins at 8:50am and all pupils are expected to be at school for registration at this time. Fifteen minutes after the close of registration a late mark becomes an unauthorised absence. The register will officially close at 9.30am after this time a child will be coded "U" which statistically counts as an unauthorised absence.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action may be taken. Where a child incurs 10 unauthorised absence marks a fixed penalty notice may be issued. If issued, a penalty of £60 per parent is payable within 21 days of issue. If unpaid this will increase to £120 to be paid within 28 days. Failure to pay may result in the Local Authority instigating legal proceedings where parents/carers may face a fine of up to £2,500.

### **Family Holidays during term time**

Parent(s)/carer(s) should avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parent(s)/carer(s) do not have the right to take their child or young person out of school for such a holiday. Headteachers can only authorise holidays during term-time in very exceptional circumstances, which are all at the Headteacher's discretion:

- Armed services returning from tour of duty where holiday could not be taken in school holiday time
- Religious observance day
- Examinations
- Approved sporting activity P code to be used
- Family crisis (adoption, bereavement, additional medical needs)
- Urgent medical appointments (routine appointments should be made outside of school hours)

Any other circumstances that do not meet the criteria stated above will be at the Headteacher's discretion. A leave of absence request form must be completed for consideration by the Headteacher prior to any absence from school.

A child who is absent longer than 20 days after the agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll and will no longer have a place at this school.

If a parent/carer chooses to take their child out of school for 5 days or more without the approval of the Headteacher they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### **What can parent(s)/carer(s) do to help?**

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child or young person is absent
- Reinforce to your child the importance of attending school
- Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary
- Be punctual

### **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 head teacher and staff at the school
- Talk to the Education Welfare Service

You may contact the Education Welfare Officer, who will work with you and the school to resolve the situation.