



# Attendance Policy

## November 2021

<b>Approved By:</b> <i>Full Governing Board</i>	<b>Date:</b> <i>11<sup>th</sup> November 2021</i>
<b>Next review Due by:</b>	<i>November 2024</i>
<b>Any signature required:</b>	



All things are possible for those who believe. (Mark 9:23)  
Learning together we grow in faith.

## **Introduction**

It is important that children develop a positive attitude to school attendance and punctuality so that they don't miss out on the opportunities at school. These qualities are an important aspect of adult life.

Poor attendance especially when condoned by the parents, disrupts a child's education in school work and can establish a pattern of behaviour which may lead to long-term truancy.

## **Legislation Framework**

Parents/Guardians, schools and local authorities have legal responsibility in ensuring that children attend school.

School must maintain an attendance register in which each pupil is marked present or absent at the beginning of each morning and afternoon.

Schools must publish attendance data showing the number of unauthorised absences in each term of the proceeding school year, expressed as a total number of possible attendances that term.

## **Aims of this policy:**

- To maximise pupil's attendance and inclusion at school and ensure that absence from school only occurs when pupils have a genuine reason.
- To help pupils and parents understand the importance of regular school attendance to pupil's educational success; the school also seeks to gain the support of parents in its implementation. To encourage regular attendance through quality first teaching and a stimulating and secure environment for all pupils.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties.
- To provide a consistent approach for all pupils and parents.
- To work closely with the Education Welfare Service and other teams in the implementation of this policy.

## **Parent's responsibilities:**

- To keep their child's absence to a minimum
- To provide a reason for any absence on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness.
- To work closely with the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any issues that may impede a child's attendance
- To be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important times such as Assessment weeks and SAT's tests
- To support their child and recognise successes and achievements

- To keep school updated should contact numbers or address details change
- The parent/guardian must ring by 8:50am to inform school for the reason for their child's absence.

### School's responsibilities

- To promote punctuality and attendance.
- To develop procedures that enable school to identify, monitor, follow up and record unauthorised absence and patterns of absence.
- To consistently record absence within the guidance of the 1996 Education Act.
- School registers are checked at 9.15am for any absences for which there is no information.
- School staff will make a call to the parent/guardian if there has been no contact with school regarding the absence.
- If a pupil has been absent and school have not been able to find out any reason for absences from the parent/guardian a home visit will be made, at least within 3 days, sooner if there are concerns.
- To develop a range of strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- To encourage communication between home and school.
- To develop procedures leading to a formal referral to the EWO.
- To further develop curriculum enrichment activities for pupils as an incentive to attend school.

### Primary School Attendance Procedures

Procedures in this policy take into consideration statutory and non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education and Local Authority.

### Categorising Absence

The Education Regulation 1991 requires schools to determine whether an absence can be deemed to be authorised or whether the child should be regarded as being absent without permission. It is only the school who can approve the absence, not the parent.

### **Authorised Absence**

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

These can include: -

- Genuine sickness.
- Hospital appointments. **Where possible medical and dental appointments should be arranged during holidays or outside the school day.** Where this is not possible it is expected that pupils only miss part of the day and that an appointment card or letter is brought into the school office as evidence.

- Religious holidays etc.
- Absence has been granted by the Headteacher through the Absence Request Procedure.

Where attendance of pupils has been identified as an area of concern the school will insist on seeing such evidence before authorising the absence. ***If a child has 3 periods of absence, further absence will be unauthorised unless medical evidence/doctors letter is provided to school.***

### **Unauthorised Absence**

- Holidays in term time.
- Visiting relatives.
- Parent/s unwell.
- Any absence that the school has not been informed about.

Little Heaton supports the view that every day in school makes a difference and we discourage parents from taking holidays in term time. In line with DfE guidance, holiday absence will no longer be granted. Where parents feel that there are truly exceptional circumstances they must put this in a letter to the Headteacher. Please note that the availability of parent's holidays, the cost of holidays within term time and visiting relatives abroad are not classified as exceptional circumstances. By definition and exceptional circumstance should be a one off, never to be repeated incidence.

There is no entitlement in law to term time holiday. Any holidays taken in term time will be marked as unauthorised absence.

We try to keep the criteria for authorising absences as simple as possible so that it is clear to parents what will and will not be authorised. This is to help avoid misunderstandings. It is imperative that parents seek authorisation for absences before final arrangements are made.

### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty notices will be issued in the following instances:

- 1) Absence is condoned by parents
- 2) Overt truancy
- 3) Unauthorised holidays in term time
- 4) Excessive/delayed return from agreed/authorised absence, without prior agreement from school

An unacceptable amount of absence may lead to legal action by the local authority.

There are 2 types of penalty notice:

Unauthorised penalty notices are issued if a minimum of 20 sessions are lost to unauthorised absence during the current term or within any 12 week period. If a child is excluded from school it is an offence for the child to be present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion.

Payment of a penalty notice within 10 days is £60 and payment after that time but within 28 days is £120 per parent, per child.

Unauthorised leave during term time are issued if a pupil is absent for a minimum of 10 sessions (5 school days) during term time.

Payment of a penalty notice within 10 days is £60 and payment after that time but within 28 days is £120.

Since the amendment of the 2013 Education (pupil registration) (England) amendment removed references to family holidays and extended leave, it has been made clear that Headteacher's may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless 'exceptional circumstances' exist. Unauthorised leave for 10 consecutive sessions (5 school days) or more will qualify for a fine. 'Exceptional circumstances' can be described as rare, significant, unavoidable and short and that a leave of absence could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

The Supreme Court has recently overturned the decision made by the high court in the 'Isle of Wight v Platt' case (2016), so the Educational Welfare Service will be reinstating the issue of fines for holiday absence in term time.

### **Punctuality**

It is important that pupils are punctual so they do not miss and at the beginning of the school day this time is important.

- The school opens at 8:55am and it is essential that children are in school ready for registration.
- The children who arrive late will be monitored and if this is repetitive parents/carers will be contacted by the Parental Liaison and Pastoral Support officer. If a child arrives after 9:25am the session will be classified as an unauthorised absence.
- If this still continues, parents will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher and Parental Liaison and Pastoral Support officer.

### **Class Registers**

Class teachers use digital registers and these should be completed at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

As a school we monitor all areas of attendance and are required to provide the DfE with our attendance data.

- Parents/guardians of all pupils who are absent for more than 3 school days (unless supporting medical evidence is provided) will be sent an email and a printout of their child's attendance for that term.
- Parents/guardians of all pupils with less than 95% will be closely monitored, if attendance drops to 92% attendance the parents / guardians will be sent an email and a printout of their child's attendance that term and invited in for a meeting.
- Percentage attendance figures are calculated on a weekly basis, including lateness for each class.
- These are reported on the school newsletter and promoted in assembly with a healthy element of competition being encouraged between classes.

### **Persistent Absentees**

Pupils whose attendance is less than 90% are referred to as 'persistent absentees by the DfE.

- Parents/guardians and school staff meet to discuss absences and agree an action plan to improve attendance.
- A letter summarising the meeting is sent to parents/guardians.
- After 6 weeks the attendance printout is reviewed by school staff.
- If the percentage has improved to above 90%, half-termly monitoring is implemented.
- If the percentage remains below 90% the parents/guardians, school staff and if possible EWO will meet to discuss the absence where further more formal actions are outlined.

### **Requests for Leave of Absence**

Absence for anything other than through illness or medical reasons during term time is actively discouraged.

Parents requesting time out of school for their child during term time should obtain a form to request leave of absence from the school office.

The Pupil Register Regulations make it clear that Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. 'Exceptional circumstances' can be described as rare, significant, unavoidable and short and that a leave of absence could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.