

## **Attendance & Truancy**

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

### **Aims**

- \* To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- \* To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- \* To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.

### **Attendance Targets/Attendance Registers**

- \* To keep whole school attendance above 96%.
- \* The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

### **Procedure**

#### **The Governing Body is responsible for:**

- \* ensuring that the attendance policy is reviewed bi-annually;
  - \* setting the attendance targets for the year;
  - \* termly monitoring of progress towards these targets.
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#### **The Head is responsible for:**

- \* the implementation of the policy;
- \* agreeing whether an absence should be authorised. The power to authorise an absence rests with the Head teacher or delegated person within the school, and not with parents or the local authority – see Appendix A for circumstances under which an absence will be authorised;
- \* the daily monitoring of school attendance;
- \* working actively to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole;
- \* having clear policies in place to address persistent absence;

- \* ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness;
- \* monitoring trends;
- \* a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- \* reporting to the Governing Body the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets;
- \* reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.

**Teachers are responsible for:**

- \* setting an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- \* implementing the policy;
- \* ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date;
- \* monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- \* informing the school office of any concerns;
- \* emphasising with children the importance of punctuality and good attendance.

**Role of Parents:**

- \* Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.
- \* Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school. Parents are responsible for:
  - \* ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
  - \* instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly;
  - \* impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct;
  - \* informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.30 am at the latest;
  - \* providing the school with an explanation for the absence;
  - \* informing the school of any changes to their contact details;

- \* taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings;
- \* working in partnership with the school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance;
- \* avoiding arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours;
- \* not booking holidays during term-time.

### **Role of Pupil Welfare Staff**

- \* The pupil welfare staff are responsible for:
  - \* implementing the policy with the Head;
  - \* monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
  - \* keeping the Head informed of attendance figures and trends;
  - \* compiling attendance data for the Head, the Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO);
  - \* ensuring registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date;
  - \* consultations with the AIO;
  - \* contacting parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 9.30 am;
  - \* sending a letter if no contact is made;
  - \* arranging meetings with parents in order to ensure clear channels of communication are in place and offer support/interventions where necessary;
  - \* ensuring that the AIO is notified of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly.

### **Encouraging Good Attendance**

- \* The School encourages good attendance by:
  - \* publicising good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the GB;
  - \* the best class attendance will be published on the school newsletters.
  - \* awarding good attendance badges to pupils when they have achieved 100% attendance.

\* other school incentives to celebrate good attendance include prize draws and stationery gifts.

## **Dealing with Lateness**

\* The Attendance Liaison Officer monitors lateness and inform:

\* the Head of patterns of lateness;

\* parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed.

\* The School doors are opened at 8.40 am and pupils are then expected to enter the school building and make their way to their classroom.

\* Children who arrive after 8.45 am must be taken to the school office by their parent/carer so they can be signed in by school for purposes of emergency evacuation etc.

\* Pupils who arrive between 8.50 am and 9.00 am will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session (Code L).

\* Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9.00 am and parent or carer provides a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.

\* Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent or carer fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U).

## **Persistent Absence**

\* Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and it is best for the school to work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue.

\* Where attendance levels fall to an unacceptable level, parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence for any further absences due to illness. If no medical evidence is provided then the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

## **Absence**

\* Holidays during term time – changes to legislation which came into force in September 2013 made clear that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If there are exceptional circumstances behind your request you should discuss these with the Attendance Liaison Officer, who will then discuss this with the Head teacher.

\* Religious Observance – a maximum of three days absence is allowed for recognised religious observance.

\* Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments – please ensure these appointments take place out of school time in order not to disrupt your child's education.

### **Fixed Penalty Notices**

Four Swannes Primary School follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Procedures. At Four Swannes Primary School we expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Head Teacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.

### **Monitoring**

We believe this policy will be effective only if we ensure consistency across the school by regular monitoring.

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## Appendix A

Absences will be authorised if:

- \* The pupil is absent with leave as agreed by the Head teacher.
- \* The pupil is ill and has not been asked to provide proof of absence.
- \* The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- \* The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision.
- \* There is a close family bereavement.
- \* Leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).
- \* Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Head teacher.

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

**Reviewed: September 2017**