

## Introduction

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement and is essential in ensuring children have the chance to reach their full potential and are in a safe environment. The Education Act 1996 requires parents/guardians to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education and are responsible for the child's school attendance and punctuality.

Children should be at school, on time, every day school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by the parent/carer.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by school, [not by the parent/carer] as either **authorised or unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as illness or other unavoidable causes. However, the unavoidable cause must relate to the child.

**Unauthorised absences** are those for which school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. These include:

- School has not given approval in advance for a pupil to be absent for leave of absence of the pupil
- School does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Any holiday not approved by the Headteacher
- Children who arrive at school, without good reason, after the registers have been closed at 9.00am
- Medical evidence requested by school has not been provided
- No explanation has been provided by the parent/carer

Some children are at times reluctant to come to school. If there are any problems with regular attendance, parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful.

## School Day

The school day begins at 8.20am and all pupils are expected to be on site by 8.15am. Pupils who arrive after this time will be marked as late using an L code. Pupils who arrive after the registers close at 9.00am will be marked as an unauthorised absence using the U code. Exceptions are when the school's official

buses are late and, at the discretion of the Headteacher, in exceptional weather or traffic circumstances.

### **Procedures**

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

#### **Illness and other legitimate reasons**

- If a pupil is unfit for school, parents/carers should contact the school on each day of absence unless alternative arrangements have been made with the school, for example a pupil in hospital: absences will not be authorised without this procedure being followed. You can ring the absence line on **01254 203803** from 8am or text anytime on **07860003916** to report an absence.
- In exceptional circumstances, medical evidence may be requested.
- Other reasons for absence must be discussed with school each time; notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing authorisation of absence.
- Leave may however be granted in an emergency, bereavement or for medical appointments, however parents/carers are encouraged to arrange such appointments after school hours or during the holidays.
- Unexplained absence cannot be authorised.
- Explanations, unless in exceptional circumstances, received after 14 school days of a pupils return to school, will not be accepted.

#### **Holidays**

- A leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time will only be granted in “special and exceptional circumstances”. This will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. An application for leave must be made to the Headteacher, in writing and in advance, by the parent/carer.
- Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of the agreed time period, will be classed as unauthorised and may incur a penalty notice. A penalty notice is issued by the local authority and currently stands at £60 per parent per child.

#### **Persistent absence**

- Any pupils with attendance below 90% is classed as being ‘persistently absent’.
- Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence for absence if their child is below 90%.
- If a child has eight or more unauthorised sessions, they may be referred to the Inclusion Officer and may lead to a penalty notice being issued or be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.
- The Inclusion Officer can also provide advice and support to help address issues affecting attendance.

**Lateness**

- Pupils must attend on time to be given a mark for that session, unless the lateness is unavoidable.
- Late arrival after registers have closed is counted as unauthorised absence unless there is good reason.

**Home visits**

- Home visits may be conducted by key members of staff if attendance becomes an issue or a safeguarding concern.

**Rewards**

There is a reward system in place for pupils with excellent attendance and incentives for improvement of pupils with a poor attendance record. Attendance is also integrated into the Bedes reward system.

**Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and to promote good attendance of 95% or above. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their children attend regularly. Staff in school are committed to working with parents/carers in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

**Responsibility for monitoring attendance**

Mr D Callaghan - Headteacher  
Mr D Milton - Head of School  
Miss N O'Toole - Senior Assistant Headteacher  
Mrs E Turner - Attendance administration officer  
Heads of College  
Pastoral Managers  
Prep Tutors  
School Inclusion Officer

