



Attendance Policy

Rationale

At Church of the Ascension Primary School we all recognise that good attendance is a whole school matter and as such is of primary concern to teaching staff, support staff, agencies such as Educational Social Worker, Learning Support and Psychological Service, Governors, parents and, of course, pupils.

Our whole school policy on pupil attendance is an essential feature in order to fulfil our mission.

We pride ourselves on a good pupil attendance record and appreciate that the partnership between all mentioned above is a strong indicator of the importance attached to the issue of attendance. It is our intention to celebrate good attendance

Attendance figures at Church of the Ascension are generally well above national averages.

Legal Framework

Under section 36 of the 1944 Education Act, parents or carers of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that their child receives full-time education, whether by regular school attendance or otherwise.

It is the responsibility of the local education authority to ensure that all pupils between the ages of 5 and 16 receive an education. The Education Social Work Service monitors school attendance on behalf of Middlesbrough Council.

This Policy and Procedures document is informed by D.F.E. Circular 11/91 "The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991" and "School Attendance - Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence". DFE 1994 - Paragraph 21, page 4 reminds us that:

"Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. The fact that a parent has offered a note or other notification (telephone call, Personal Record Book) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it".

Our policy is based on:

- The close monitoring of attendance and all absences;
- The importance of responsibility being placed on parents and pupils for communicating any absence to school via clear information systems;
- A strong school/parent partnership where all recognise the need for good attendance.

Aims

The following school aims are closely associated with this policy statement:

To provide each child with a broad, balanced, differentiated curriculum, regardless of race, gender or ability.

To build a school community in which everyone is committed to the good of that community and feels a valued member of it.

To encourage the development of self confidence and self esteem, so that each member of the school community may feel valued, and reach his or her full potential.

Definitions

Absence

When a pupil does not arrive at school for a session (half-day)

Authorised Absence

see appendix 1

Unauthorised Absence

see appendix 1

Absconding

When a pupil leaves the school site without permission. Any member of staff who is aware that a pupil has absconded must inform The Deputy Head Teacher or Head Teacher. A search will be instigated and parents contacted.

Reporting data

The School is required to provide attendance data to the DFEE, concerning the percentage (%) of pupils who have one or more sessions of unauthorised absence, the % of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence and the same data is provided in respect of authorised absences. This data is used by the Government as a performance indicator for the school.

The Head teacher gives information to the Governing Body on attendance and on any strategies to improve attendance.

Clear monitoring through procedures.

Registration

The class teacher is responsible for careful and accurate recording of attendance of his/her class and to record the pupil as present (/) or absent (N). It is a legal requirement to take the register at 8.50 a.m. and 1.00 p.m.

This is done using the INTERGRIS attendance register. The register closes at 9.00 a.m. and at 1.10 p.m.

The school secretary checks registers every day and makes contact with parents if an absence is unexplained. This is completed 30 minutes after the register closes.

Registration codes – see Appendix 1

Dudley schools will use the Registration Codes as found in the DfES absence guidelines see below. This replaces Annex A of Circular 10/99.

Detailed guidance re. absence codes can be downloaded from the DVRC (Dudley Virtual Resource Centre), see link

<http://www.dudley.rmplc.co.uk/dynamic/service/curriculum/integriss/attendance/index.htm>

Lateness

Registration period is 10 minutes and any child arriving after the register is closed is to be recorded L (late before registers closed). Statistical meaning = Present.

Pupils who arrive after the register is closed, are recorded U (late after registers closed). Statistical meaning = Unauthorised absence.

The school operates a LATE BOOK for children who arrive after the register closes and the school secretary will change registration marks from N to L or U on the INTEGRIS computer attendance system from entries in the LATE BOOK.

The LATE BOOK should be taken from the office in the event of an actual fire or fire drill as a means of confirming attendance numbers.

Post registration truancy/non attendance at lessons

The class teacher can expect a note, a personal visit or a phone message to explain an absence, and if none of these are apparent the absence will be registered as unauthorised. Parents must give prior notification of appointments, holidays, family circumstances e.g. A Funeral.

Amending register codes

The class teacher should amend the registration code if he/she receives a satisfactory explanation of absence. The school secretary can amend the registration code if a telephone call is received. A record of telephone communication concerning absence is kept in the staff room and should be consulted by staff in the first instance if an absence is unexplained. Registers should be checked by class teachers at the end of each week for amendment and any outstanding absence reported to Senior Staff.

Serious Non-attendance

The headteacher will contact parents/carers in the case of non-attendance and a referral to the E.S.W. Service will be made if the absence continues.

Education Welfare Service (EWS)

Pupils may be referred to the EWS according to the current referral procedure.

The school has an EWS allocation to include strategic time and case load. The EWO will work with the pupils and their families to encourage better attendance and set attendance targets

Senior staff will make regular spot checks.

Penalty notices:

Step 1 When a pupil has 10 days unauthorised absence the school should send out a warning in the form of a EWS advice letter and leaflet.

Step 2 If the pupil's attendance does not improve and unauthorised absence reaches 20 days then the school can request that the EWS issue a penalty notice. A maximum of 3 penalty notices may be issued in 12 months

Promoting good attendance

- using school promotional material, parent evenings, Home / school agreements to engage parents/carers
- using school assemblies to raise awareness
- communicating clearly with pupils and parents about the consequences of condoned absence and truancy through newsletters and parent presentations
- reminding parents of their legal obligations and the potential sanctions e.g. Penalty notices
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence
- have procedures in place which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members
- providing information about the range of support services that parents can access.

Rewards

In each half term class teachers should praise these pupils with 100% attendance and award merit marks and, at the end of the year, in an awards assembly, the Head teacher will give a certificate for 100% attendance for the whole year.

All of the above have helped us significantly to achieve a very good attendance figure. In addition we consider the following to be of vital importance:-

- A pupil's enjoyment of school;
- Good relationships between pupils, staff and parents;
- Appropriate school activities, both in and outside of school time

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils:

- to attend school regularly and punctually
- to arrive in school by 8.45 am and 12.55 pm
- to attend registration promptly. Those who register after 9.00 am and 1.10 pm will be given a late mark
- to sign out at the office when leaving the site for approved appointments
- to supply their form teacher with an absence note on returning to school on the first day after absence

Parent/carer:

- to ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- to notify the school on the first day of absence
- to provide a note to explain any absences on the first day the pupil returns to school
- Alternatively to telephone school with explanation of absence.
- to take their family holidays in the school holiday period
- to provide the school with a telephone number on which they can be contacted (NB if a parent does not supply this information and the school has concerns they may contact social services or the police)

These responsibilities are included in the Home School Agreement

Class Teacher:

- to keep an accurate attendance register
- to praise pupils for good attendance and punctuality
- to take action (specific to school) when pupils are late
- to monitor pupil absence
- to inform Senior Staff when absence is impacting on achievement.

School management:

- to have a named Governor for attendance.
- To appoint an Attendance Leader (who is The Head teacher) with responsibility for the strategic management of the attendance agenda and for reporting absence to the DfES
- to set clear and challenging attendance targets as part of school self review
- intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern
- develop a multi agency response to the attendance agenda
- utilise the support of available specialists in relation to the attendance agenda

Policy Review

The policy will be monitored and evaluated for its effectiveness by staff, yearly at designated staff meetings; by Governors as part of their policy monitoring.

The school currently has exemplary attendance with 0.0%-unauthorised absence, and 3.1% authorised absence. however if needed strategies would be developed to reintegrate long-term truants and excluded pupils, which address the needs of all pupils.