



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

- At Blaydon West Primary School, we promote excellent attendance and punctuality as there is a clear link between attendance, punctuality and achievement.
- With excellent attendance and punctuality, children will benefit from everything we offer as a school
- We recognise that excellent attendance is not always a priority among some parents and we work, together with a number of outside agencies, to try to alter attitudes where this is the case.
- Excellent attendance is important if children are to be encouraged to be valuable members of society.
- There is a clear link between non-attendance and social exclusion; this can lead to involvement in crime.
- Punctuality is important so that pupils can start the day on time, ready to learn. Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.
- This policy should be read in conjunction with guidelines on exclusion, behaviour, anti bullying and other documentation referring to social inclusion.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act requires parents or carers to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. This is a prime responsibility of parents /carers.

Aims

- To have a manageable whole school approach to attendance and punctuality procedures.
- To teach children the importance of attendance and punctuality
- To promote excellent attendance and punctuality in order to ensure continuity of education and maximise children's academic potential.
- To ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance and to work with parents if difficulties arise.
- To work alongside other agencies, including the Legal Intervention Team, if difficulties arise so that effective action can be put into place.
- To reward children who have good attendance and punctuality.
- To monitor attendance and punctuality effectively so difficulties are quickly highlighted.
- To make everyone aware of the detrimental effect of absences and lateness on the education of our children.

Procedures

At Blaydon West Primary School we will ensure that:

- pupils are registered accurately and efficiently at 9.00 am and 1.00/1.15pm. This is recorded in the official school register
- All children should be marked either present or absent.
- Register codes are strictly adhered to
- Registers close at 9.15 am and at 1:30pm
- attendance targets are set for individual pupils and year groups
- pupil attendance and lateness is monitored regularly
- school attendance statistics are reported
- we work with the Legal Intervention Team to support persistent offenders and their families
- attendance is monitored on a monthly basis and given a full termly audit

Procedures for Dealing with Absence and Lateness

ABSENCE

- On the first day of absence parents must inform the school of the reason for their child's absence.
- This reason must be recorded in the absence book and on SIMS.
- If no message is received, the office staff or family support worker will telephone and text the parents/carers of all unexplained absentees from 9:30am onwards and record explanations in the absence book and on SIMS.
- If there is no response, further attempts will be made to contact the parents/carers. This should be recorded in the absence book and SIMS.
- Social Services or other agencies could be contacted if contact is unable to be made with parents/carers
- A letter to parents/carers asking for an explanation of absence will be sent.
- If no explanation is still forthcoming, an unauthorised absence will be recorded.
- Notes about absences must be forwarded to the School Office
- Verbal explanations must be noted and forwarded to the School Office

PUNCTUALITY

- School begins at 8.55am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time.
- Any child arriving later than 9.00am should enter via the main entrance, reporting to the school office. If accompanied, a parent or carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be noted on SIMS. The child will then be sent to their classroom.
- Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern further action will be taken.

Trends in absences and punctuality are scrutinised by the Head Teacher.

Inclusion

This school believes that every pupil is of equal value and has the right to equal education opportunities, irrespective of age, ability, race, creed and gender; therefore we:

- respond appropriately to children's diverse needs and are aware of the needs of children with differing: genders, special educational needs, disabilities and cultural ethnic and social backgrounds.
- are aware of the need to overcome potential barriers to learning and the importance of attendance and punctuality as an aspect of this.

Absence

Absence is categorised as authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised Absence:

- Genuine illness - although, if the length of illness is considered to be unreasonable, further action will be considered such as a request for medical evidence or meeting with the Head Teacher
- Medical and dental appointments - where it is unavoidable that they take place in school time (appointment cards should always be seen).
- Family Bereavements - for an agreed period of time.
- Days of religious observance - advance notice should be given in this case.
- Temporary exclusion - as a result of a specific action by the Head Teacher.
- Permanent exclusion - while the appeal process is ongoing.
- Attendance at a Pupil Referral Unit - where attendance is dual registered.
- Late arrival before registers close (indicated by an L on the register).
- Late arrival after registers close (indicated by a U on the register).

Unauthorised Absence:

- **Unexplained absences** - the School Business Manager contacts the parents/carers by telephone or text and sends a letter to the parents/carers, in the first instance, if no explanation is provided.
- **Holidays during term time**
- **Truancing** - Staying off school for haircuts, purchase of party/prom clothes, shoes etc

Leave of Absence

Any leave of absence during term will not be granted during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. School will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

While leave of absence may be granted during term time, it is entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion and it is not a parental right. (see appendix 1)

Holidays during Term Time

- Holidays will not be authorised during term time
- If the holiday is taken, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence
- Parents can be referred to the Local Authority and fines of £60 per child issued

Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

The Head Teacher, Admin Officer and Family Support Worker meet regularly to monitor attendance.

- Attendance and punctuality are discussed at parents' evenings where concerns are identified
- Regular checks will be made to ascertain any children whose attendance is below 95%. Each case is considered on an individual basis. If the absence is deemed unacceptable, the following staged response is followed:
- Warning letter from school to ensure parents are aware of attendance concerns. Medical evidence may be requested and any further absences may not be authorised without information from a health care professional
- Monitor for 4 weeks
- Invitation into school to discuss issues with the Head Teacher and to identify strategies and targets for improvement
- Set targets and monitor for 6 weeks
- Completion of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or referral to outside agencies, if appropriate
- Referral to Legal Intervention Team.
- Persistent lateness is monitored by the Admin Officer and Family Support Worker and discussed with the Head Teacher. Any concerns regarding punctuality will be dealt with in the following ways:
 1. Warning letter
 2. Monitor for 4 weeks
 3. Meeting with Head Teacher
 4. Set targets and monitor for 6 weeks
 5. Completion of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or referral to outside agencies, if appropriate

Reward systems for good attendance

As a school we make every effort to promote good attendance. The following systems are in place across the school in order to support this:

- ❖ Individual programs with targeted children to improve attendance
- ❖ Rewards for improved attendance termly
- ❖ Rewards and certificates for 100% attendance termly
- ❖ Golden time for class with best weekly attendance
- ❖ Prizes available for 100% attendance and punctuality

- ❖ Displays to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and celebrating good attendance

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Attendance Rewards

- Every child that has 100% attendance for the whole school year receives a certificate and prize on the last day of the summer term
- The class with the best attendance each week received the attendance trophy in Monday morning's assembly

Liaison with Parents/Carers

Information about attendance and punctuality is included regularly in the Friday newsletter. There is also information on the school website. Leaflets are sent to parents informing them of the benefits of good attendance.

Role of Governors

Governors determine, support and review school policies. They support the aims of this policy by making resources available wherever possible. They receive termly reports concerning attendance, which they use for monitoring purposes. The Attendance governor works with the Head Teacher to determine, review and implement policies and procedures.

Pupils are taught the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality. They are encouraged to:

- attend school regularly
- inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absence
- try to achieve an attendance certificate
- attend regularly so that each class has the best opportunity to win the attendance cup
- arrive at school on time

Parents or carers will:

- ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time
- inform the school on the first day of non-attendance
- discuss planned absences with the school in advance
(eg. Family holidays during term time, special occasions)

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This school will review this attendance policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be shared with parents and promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Reviewed by Simon Brown

Review date: November 2016

Due for review: November 2017