



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Statement of Intent

All children of statutory school-age who are registered at a school must, by law attend school regularly. Any absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have a detrimental effect on their future progress. Regularly taking time off school for family holidays or events can have significant impact on a child's achievement.

### Aims

1. To raise pupil attendance
2. To provide a co-ordinated approach to attendance.
3. To work with the Legal Intervention Team (if necessary), agencies, parents and children.
4. To maintain a regular overview of attendance data to inform priorities.
5. To raise the profile of good attendance and punctuality amongst pupils and parents.
6. To reward good attendance.

### Our Strategy

The School Business Manager (SBM)/School Clerk will send out half-termly letters to parents whose children's attendance has begun to fall below 96%. This is to alert parents to the fact that the attendance is below an expected level and to remind them of the efforts that are being made to improve overall attendance in school. This is a "friendly" letter rather than the more formal stance that the SBM will take with the group who fall within the 90-80%.

The SBM /School Clerk prioritise the lowest attendees. To attempt to make some improvement with them before their attendance becomes a major issue. The school will simultaneously work with families who have entrenched poor attendance.

Regular review meetings will be held to discuss entrenched poor attendees. Cases will be moved on through the formal non-attendance procedures where appropriate. Our approach is hard line with the aim of returning children to school as quickly as possible.

The SBM's report will inform governors of attendance issues.

First Day Absence calling is done daily as necessary by the office staff. The Head Teacher either phones or personally speaks to parents of persistent poor attendees and informs them that their attendance is being closely monitored.

## **Leave of Absence**

**Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** This is in line with The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006.

**Parents must make an application for leave of absence only by using the school “Leave of Absence” form and the application must be made at least two weeks in advance of the start date of the leave.** The Head Teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Every request will receive a response direct from the Head Teacher in writing and you may also be asked to come in and meet with the Head Teacher. Where a leave of absence is granted the Head Teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher’s discretion and even with permission being given, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence..

Parents are therefore asked to take holidays only during the school holidays and not to book holidays during school term time.

Any leave of absence taken which is unauthorised will result in an unauthorised absence mark being allocated to the child and will be brought to the attention of the Legal Intervention Team at Gateshead local Authority. This could result in a penalty notice and fine or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

## **Rewards**

- The Head Teacher holds a weekly assembly where awards are given to the class with the best attendance and punctuality.
- Pupils who have excellent attendance and punctuality are mentioned in the Newsletter. Children with 100% attendance all year will have their photograph published in a newsletter and will receive a certificate and prize.
- At the end of each term a Head Teacher’s “party” is held and invitations are sent to pupils who have achieved excellent attendance. Sometimes this will take the form of a picnic, a breakfast or high tea.
- Each term, certificates are issued to those children with 100% attendance for the term.

## **Covid 19 Exceptions**

Exceptions to this policy can be made by the Headteacher in response to government directed self- isolation and absences for Covid-19 testing. Children absent for Covid-19 related matters will be allocated the appropriate absence code and will be noted as having authorised absence. All up to date government guidance will be followed by the school.