



# Attendance Policy

It is a shared belief of the school and governors that a high priority should be placed on children's school attendance. The school recognises that there is a strong link between good attendance and successful achievement. All parties recognise that attendance impacts on children's attainment and life chances. The careful monitoring of attendance is also necessary in the safe interests of children who are potentially at risk when not accounted for. Our aim is to have all our children in school every day.

This is a hardworking school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. Equality of treatment and opportunity operate regardless of background, ability, gender, religion, disability or ethnicity.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is **unavoidable**.

It is **very important** therefore that you make sure that your child **attends regularly** and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

**Any** absence (including missing part of a lesson due to lateness) affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is **your** legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an **offence** in law and may result in **prosecution**.

## **The Law relating to attendance**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:*

- a) to age, ability and aptitude and*
  - b) to any special educational needs he/she may have*
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

## **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents and carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

## **Definitions**

**Authorised Absence:** An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian; for example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. However, when a child's attendance falls below 93%, medical evidence is required for the absence to be authorised. Parents will be informed in writing when this is the case.

**Unauthorised Absence:** An absence is classified as unauthorised when: - a child arrives after 9.00 a.m. - a child's attendance falls below 93% and no medical evidence is - provided for future absences - a family

holiday has been requested but not agreed Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. In cases where the pupil's attendance is causing concern, parents will be informed in writing and will be asked to provide medical evidence for any future absences. This currently applies to all pupils whose attendance falls below 92%. Failure to provide such will result in the absence being unauthorised. Should the attendance not improve, a home visit will be carried out by the Attendance Team. Failure to improve the child's attendance at school may result in a referral to the Attendance Service. An Attendance & Prosecutions Officer who works on behalf of the Local Authority may consider taking legal action against the parent under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. School expects all pupils to attend regularly and to arrive on time

### **Unauthorised absences:**

are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which permission has not been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- **children who arrive at school too late to get an attendance mark** in the register;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays; *and*
- day trips and holidays in term time **which have not been agreed**

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is **never** better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence, ideally by 9.00am;
- or call into school and report to the office staff.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Text you
- telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- If school can still not contact parents, a home visit may take place.

### **Telephone numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **Punctuality:**

Being late is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, especially phonics and grammar. It can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

The doors are opened to pupils at 8.45 a.m. and closed at 8.55 a.m. The late bell rings at 8.55 am. After which time, pupils must report to the school office where they will be given a 'Late Mark' to take to Class.

The school doors open at **8.45 am. Parents/ carers are responsible for their children until 8.45am.** If you send your child to school before 8.45 am their safety is **your** responsibility – **not the school's.** Children must not be left unsupervised anywhere around the school. It is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure they are looked after until school opens at 8.45am. Any parent leaving a child unsupervised before school will be reported to Children's Services.

All teaching staff are legally responsible for taking the register at the start of both the morning and afternoon session and recording it accurately. The school uses Sims.net for this purpose. Should a child be absent and the reason known, a message must be sent to the office. The specific reason needs to be entered by the office. It is not sufficient to state that the child is 'poorly.' If a child has a medical appointment during the school day, proof needs to be provided. If the child is in school at the start of the session i.e. when the register is taken, they should be marked as 'present' using the appropriate code (/)

GOLD	Your child's attendance is above 97%. They are likely to be a <b>'Star Performer'</b> as well as an <b>'excellent attender'</b> . They will almost certainly achieve the best for their ability and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work.
GREEN	Your child's attendance is 94% plus. They are on <b>'Green for go'</b> for good attendance and are likely to achieve the grades that will give them real opportunities to continuing their studies or in the world of work.
AMBER	Your child's attendance is 90%-94%. They are on <b>'Amber – Take care!'</b> They will be missing up too 20 school days each year and this will make it difficult for them to achieve their best.
RED	Your child's attendance is between 80% and 90%. They are a <b>'Red light'</b> be alert! They will be missing so much time from school that it will be very difficult for them to keep in touch with lessons or work. They will not reach their full potential and could achieve a lot more. You may receive a visit from the Educational Welfare Officer.
WARNING	Your child's attendance is below 80%. <b>IMMEDIATE ACTION</b> by parents is required. They are missing so much time from school that it will be almost impossible for them to keep in touch with lessons or work. The Government now classes your child as a 'Persistent truant'. Pupils will be referred to the Sandwell A&P Service

### Leave of Absence

All requests for leave of absence in term time should be requested by completing the school leave of absence form, which is available from the school office.

We request Leave of absence forms should be made in writing to the headteacher before the leave is required. Any supporting documentation is requested e.g. tickets/flight/booking are made. We request an explanation of the circumstances that have led to the leave to be taken in term time.

Please be aware, leave can only be authorised on the content of the request and will only be authorised at the Headteacher's discretion.

### Holidays in Term time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's academic progress as much as any other absence, and we expect parents to help us by not taking pupils away in term time.

Holidays taken in term time may be referred to Sandwell's Attendance and Prosecution Service, who may issue a Penalty Notice fine which is £60 per child per parent, rising to £120 per child per parent if not paid within 21 days.

### **Incentives for attendance 2019/2020**

- Weekly class rewards – Attendance Trophy presented in assembly
- extra playtime for classes with 100%
  
- 1<sup>st</sup> half termly reward – Postcards home for each child with 100%
- Bag of goodies for the best attending class for the half term across key stages
- Individual attendance certificates – Bronze 1<sup>st</sup> term Silver 2<sup>nd</sup> term Gold 3<sup>rd</sup> Term
- Children with 100% attendance are invited to Ice Cream parlour at the end of the summer term

### **Staff responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Mr A Dickinson – Head teacher

Miss K James – Deputy Head teacher

Mrs T Wilkins-Francis – Education Welfare Officer

Mrs H Ford – Attendance Administrator

Mrs E Round – Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mr R Bruce – Safeguarding/Attendance Governor