

## **Attendance Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive a suitable full time education. All parents/carers have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens. Once a child is registered at a school, parents/carers are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly and punctually. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Excellent attendance is important for a child's education. Having a good education is an important factor in opening more opportunities in adult life.

Did you know that:

- A child who is absent a day of school per week misses an equivalent of two years of their school life.
- 90% of young people with absence rates below 85% fail to achieve five or more good grades of GCSE and around one third achieve no GCSEs at all
- Poor examination results limit young people's options and poor attendance suggest to colleges that these students are unreliable

GCSEs may seem a long way off for you and your child but all absence at any stage leads to gaps in your child's learning. This in turn can:

- Mean that they fall behind in work
- Affect their motivation
- Affect their enjoyment of learning
- Lead to poor behaviour
- Affect their desire to attend school regularly
- Affect their confidence in school
- Mean they miss out on the social life of school and extra-curricular opportunities and experiences
- Affect their ability to have or keep friendships

### **2. Aims and Objectives**

In order to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality, we will

- endeavour to provide a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment
- and in doing so, encourage excellent attendance
- both recognise and reward excellent attendance
- develop positive attitudes towards school by striving to make Perryfields Primary a happy and rewarding experience for all children
- make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school
- work with parents/carers to raise awareness of the importance of such and seek to provide appropriate support where needed

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the Governing Board are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

### **3. Punctuality**

School doors are open to pupils at 8.45 a.m. and closed at 8.55 a.m. Pupils entering the school building as the bell rings, through any of the doors allocated, must be noted down by the staff on duty and names given to the reception staff.

Once the bell has rung, class registers must be taken straight after and **NOT** before. Pupils who arrive after the gates have been closed must report to the school office where they will be given an 'I have been to the office' card. **All lates will be entered by the office staff.** They will record the number of minutes late. The teacher must use the N code (No reason yet given) for any child who is not in class when the register is taken.

Please note that if a child arrives in class (late) without a card, the Class Teacher must send them straight to the office for registration. They will be marked by the Office Staff as 'Late' using the 'L' symbol if they are no later than 9.25 a.m. Any children arriving after this time are marked as unauthorised late using the 'U' symbol. This counts as an absence.

**The school expects all children to arrive at school on time and to be collected on time at the end of the school day.**

Should punctuality cause concern, contact will be made with the parent/carer to highlight such and suitable solutions discussed. Should this continue to be an issue, a referral may be made to The Schools Attendance Support Service which could lead to further action being taken by the Local Authority.

**All teaching staff are legally responsible for taking the register at the start of both the morning and afternoon session and recording it accurately.**

This is a legal document that is kept for five years. The school uses Sims.net for this purpose. Failure to comply may lead to disciplinary action.

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 (/) and not as 'medical' (M). Pupils must be signed out and back in upon return to school by parents/carers at the school office.

#### 4. **Authorised Absence**

If a child is unable to attend school due to illness, parents/carers are requested to notify the school on the first day of absence. The school may contact parents/carers if more information is required. The school operates a 'first day' calling system for parents/carers who do not make contact. The school has a service enabling parents/carers to call and leave a message should the office be closed at the time of calling. **Please note that absences will only be authorised when school is informed by the parent or carer.**

However, when a child's attendance falls below 92% (dependent on the number of possible sessions overall), medical evidence is required for the absence to be authorised. Parents/carers will be informed in writing when this is the case.

In cases where there is cause for concern about the genuineness of the illness, medical evidence such as a prescription or an appointment card may be requested. A note from a doctor is not necessary. If school is not satisfied that the illness is genuine, it may be recorded as unauthorised. The parents/carers will be notified if this is the case.

#### 5. **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is recorded as unauthorised when:

- a child arrives after 9.25 a.m.
- a child's attendance has fallen below 92% and no medical evidence is provided
- a family holiday has been requested but not agreed
- school has reason to believe that the child has been on holiday

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason. Examples of absences which the school is unlikely to authorise can include:

- sickness of a parent or other family member
- child being used as a carer
- problems with transport
- days off for birthdays or shopping trips
- family holiday

In cases where the pupil's attendance is causing concern, parents/carers will be informed in writing and will be asked to provide medical evidence for any future absences (Appendix A). 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 may be carried out by the Family Link workers, dependent upon circumstances and as deemed necessary.

Persistent Absence is defined as attendance falling below 90%. In a bid to prevent pupils from falling into this category, the school closely monitors attendance figures and will identify pupils who have an attendance of 92% or below.

Failure to improve the child's attendance at school may result in a referral to the School Attendance Support Service. A School Attendance Support Service 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**.

The Governing Board, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents/carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

## **6. Monitoring Attendance**

It is the responsibility of the Governing Board to monitor overall attendance. Attendance of all pupils is monitored on a monthly basis; any pupils causing concern, either with a history of poor attendance or their attendance falls below 92% will be highlighted and action taken. A letter will be sent to parents informing them of their child's attendance and that future absences will not be authorised unless medical evidence is provided. (Appendix A). This requirement will continue until their attendance improves and is above 92%. In addition, a home visit may be made by the Family Link Workers when pupils with poor attendance have further absences, despite contact having been made. Should attendance not improve, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher/Deputy Head and a Family Link Worker (Appendix B).

Attendance is reported in the termly Headteacher's Report to the Governing Board.

## **7. Safeguarding & Support**

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher will take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then immediately contact the parent/carer, in order to check on the safety of the child. The Family Link Workers may complete a home visit when a pupils' attendance is causing concern or when siblings are absent on the same day.

The Headteacher will follow Safeguarding Procedures should the concerns regarding the family be significant and no successful contact made, despite support mechanisms having been provided by the school.

Special provision will be made available to parents/carers who experience genuine difficulty in supporting their child's attendance. This provision will depend upon individual circumstances but could include support from the Family Link Worker, Breakfast Club provision, referral to external agencies etc

The Family Link Workers will carry out home visits as follows:

- When a pupils' attendance is causing concern (the parent/carer will have been informed that this is the case)
- When siblings are absent on the same day
- When there is doubt regarding the reason given for absence

## **8. Requests for Leave of Absence**

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend. A Leave of Absence Form **must** be completed in advance.

**Revised guidelines issued by the government outline that no requests for holidays taken during term time will be authorised.**

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, Head Teachers **may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** Exceptional circumstances **do not include** family holidays, visiting relatives or friends, to be a spectator at sporting or other events, looking after unwell family members, babysitting younger family members, birthdays or shopping etc.

If parents/carers choose to take their child out of school during term time without leave of absence being granted then it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence on the school register.

Parents/carers who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance can be fined £60 (per parent, per child) by the School Attendance Support Service. If the payment is not made within 21 days this increases to £120. If payment is not made within 28 days further legal proceedings may be started.

We will make a referral to the School Attendance Support Service for pupils who take unauthorised leave of five days or more. Such a referral may lead to a Penalty Notice being issued.

If parents/carers consider that a 'request for leave of absence' during term time is for 'exceptional circumstances' then a written request should be made to the Head Teacher.

As an inclusive school, Perryfields Primary acknowledges the required observations for religious faiths. Therefore, a **maximum of one day**, at any one time, will be authorised upon request from the parent/carer of the child concerned.

## **9. Long-term Absence**

When children have an illness resulting in them being absent from school for six days or more, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that

they can keep up with their school work. Parents/carers need to make this request and keep school informed.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

#### **10. Rewarding Excellent Attendance**

All children who have 100% attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term, namely bronze for any one term in the academic year, and silver for any two terms.

Gold certificates are awarded to children who achieve 100% attendance for the whole year. A gift token will also be awarded in recognition of such an achievement.

#### **11. Attendance Targets**

Class attendance is monitored on a weekly basis.

Excellent attendance is encouraged on a regular basis; a class that has had 100% attendance will also receive a pear for their tree. The school expects at least 96% attendance for all pupils, unless there is a genuine medical reason that could affect this.