



Dear Parents/Carers

## **Re: School Attendance**

As we begin a new academic year, I thought it was a good opportunity to provide you with some clear information around school attendance.

Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

### **Types of Absence**

Each absence is classed as either authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given. Parents and carers will automatically receive a letter stating whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

### **Authorised or Unauthorised Absences**

Genuine reasons for absence, include the following:

- Sickness
- Medical or dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement

The following absences **will not** be authorised by school:

- Looking after siblings or sick relatives
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Holidays
- Weddings

### **Illness and First Day Call**

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 9.00am. If you do not supply us with this information, we have a duty to contact you so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure.

Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness, we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the School Health Service.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents come first to the Office

before collecting children. Please bring your child to the office on returning from the appointment. The office may require a copy of the appointment card/letter. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences.

### **Emergency Occasions**

There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs.

### **Lateness**

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present for registration; this is done at 8.50 am each day. Meeting and exchanging news with friends before school is important for the children's social development. Lateness causes problems over lunch numbers, register marking and missed instructions. Where a genuine reason for lateness exists, this will be an authorised absence but where explanations are inadequate or the lateness is after 9.00 a.m. then an absence (late) will be recorded.

### **Leave of Absence:**

#### **Holidays**

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. The only exemption to this is where parents serve in the armed forces (this does not extend to the emergency services i.e. Police, Fire, Ambulance etc). Where authorisation is not granted then subsequent term time holiday absence will be reported as a matter of course to the Education Welfare Service; we are under a duty to do this.

#### **Approved Public Performance**

Where children are invited to perform in a licensed show or concert (e.g. orchestra, pantomime) you are asked to consult with staff about how much time away from school is required. Where possible such requests will be granted provided that the child's education is unlikely to suffer. The school will also be sympathetic towards leave to participate in a recognized city, county or national sporting event.

Where parents wish to take their child(ren) out of school during term time for purposes other than holidays, they should complete the leave of absence form. These are available from the Office or on the school website.

#### **What we are aiming for**

Average attendance would be around 96.5% for the year..

#### **What is considered as poor attendance**

Anything below 94% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance dips below 85% we will have serious concerns. Below 85% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE. In this school we are aiming for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 96.5%. We monitor attendance and provide termly reports on each pupil's attendance. At the end of each half term we identify all those pupils whose attendance has fallen below 90% and issue a courtesy letter or make telephone call informing parents. We then monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken weeks developing.

Our duty of care in responding to unauthorised and persistent absence – possible consequences

We hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding about the School's expectations in this matter.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and we would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our attendance record.

Kind regards



Mr S Silverwood

**Head Teacher**