



St Andrew's Primary School SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

March 2015

Person Responsible	The Headteacher
Review Date	11 November 2014
Named Governor	Cherril Pope
Monitoring schedule	Weekly: Teachers/School Secretary Termly: School Secretary/Governor Termly: Headteacher/CMEO/Governor/Secretary
Governor Evaluation	School Improvement Committee

POLICY RATIONALE

A high level of attendance is an important factor in promoting high standards in learning and important routines in preparation for later life.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- To improve learning outcomes through an increase in overall attendance of children at school
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including children, parents, teachers and governors
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school
- To promote effective partnerships with the Children Missing Education Service and with other services and agencies
- To recognise the needs of the individual child with prolonged illness and when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

PRINCIPLES

Regular and full attendance at school is an essential part of being able to deliver a good education.

The school promotes positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by students will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Attendance requires a team effort from the Headteacher, teachers, administrative staff, parents and children in partnership with governors. (Expectations and responsibilities are set out in the **IMPLEMENTATION** section.)

MONITORING ATTENDANCE WILL INVOLVE

- **Class level:** Weekly patterns of lateness and attendance will be monitored by class/year group (by number & percentage).
- **School level:** Patterns of termly lateness and attendance will be regularly reviewed and analysed by the School Secretary and a nominated governor and information produced for recommendations by the Attendance Team
- **Senior Management level:** An Attendance Team, consisting of the Headteacher, CME0, School Secretary and a nominated Governor will meet to consider the analysis of the information on a termly basis. Children with attendance below 85% will be referred formally to CMES (Children Missing Education Service) and those with random or consistent absence relating to illness will be referred for Medical Action Plans (MAP)

EVALUATION

- School attendance trends will be analysed and evaluated at each meeting of the Governors' School Improvement Committee (SIC) to ensure that robust and appropriate action is taken. The Disproportionate Graph will be presented to each meeting.
- The Attendance Policy will be evaluated after one year by the SIC committee

ORGANISATION

The School will operate a computerised attendance system through the Schools' Information Management System (SIMS).

Registers will be completed by class teachers at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Absences will be categorised in accordance with the official Attendance Codes on SIMS.

The school will operate a 'first day' contact system so that all unexplained absences will be checked with parents.

High levels of attendance will be celebrated with children and parents. Prizes and certificates will be awarded. Cases of poor attendance will be identified and investigated by appropriate staff.

Absence notes/memos will be recorded and stored appropriately

Absence queries will be completed by the School Secretary

Attendance information will be analysed to determine whether any particular group of children is predominant among absentees, e.g. ethnicity, SEN, FSME/FSM and ability through the Disproportionality Graph.

School policy and procedures in attendance will be explained to parents through the appropriate booklets/newsletters and induction arrangements.

THE POLICY WILL BE IMPLEMENTED through a team approach with clear expectations and responsibilities:

EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Children

Should expect

- to know that attendance at school is essential to good learning
- to receive feedback when attendance is causing concern
- to know that poor attendance will affect success at school
- to know how attendance information is reported
- to be rewarded when attendance is good or shows great improvement

Teachers

Should expect

- that attendance is a very high priority
- to be provided with attendance information from the office on a weekly basis

are responsible for

- completing the school register in accordance with **statutory requirements**, that is **morning** and **afternoon**
- passing on all relevant information to the school secretary
- acknowledging good attendance and discussing any deteriorating trend in attendance with parents as appropriate.

Parents'/Carers

should expect

- to have their child's attendance recorded accurately and in accordance with the statutory requirements
- to have accurate attendance information given to them on school reports
- to be informed if patterns of attendance are causing concern

are responsible for

- carrying out their legal duty to ensure that their child/children attend school regularly and on time every day unless illness or another serious emergency prevents them doing so
- Notifying the school when absence is unavoidable and giving a justifiable reason
- Checking the termly report on attendance which will be sent home

KEY ROLES

The Class Teacher

is the key person involved in monitoring the day to day attendance of children. Their specific responsibilities are:

- Complete their class register accurately at the start of each **morning** and **afternoon** school
- On their return to school to ask children for notes and/or reason for any unexplained absences
- Pass information to the School Secretary.
- Monitor lateness on a day-to-day basis and remind children of the importance of being at school on time
- Assist in the completion and distribution of attendance certificates

Role of the School Secretary

- The School Secretary will administer the SIMS attendance system on a day-to-day basis which will include the 'first day contact' of the parents of absent students.
- Prepare an analysis of attendance on a weekly basis by
- Prepare Class lists for attendance (in rank order of percentage attendance) and marking the defining boundaries of groups:
 - 95%+
 - 90- 94%
 - 85-89%+
 - Below 85%
- Produce the Disproportionate Graph and be aware of movement within the groups of children in the school
- Produce evidence for the Attendance Team and Governors.

The Role of Governors working with the headteacher

Governors will

- monitor and evaluate the Attendance Policy through the School Improvement committee
- organise a sub-committee for cases of appeal for unauthorised holidays taken in term time
- attend meetings as necessary to interview parents in cases of intractable attendance problems for their child.

PUNCTUALITY – LATENESS TO SCHOOL

Lateness

Punctuality is an essential life skill. Parents are responsible for making appropriate arrangements for children to arrive at school on time. There will be exceptional circumstances which result in a child's lateness. It should be noted that in such exceptional circumstances, a child arriving after 9.30 am will be marked absent. Regular and persistent absence will be monitored and a meeting will be held with the school in order to establish strategies which can improve the situation.

This will become a major focus in the Summer Term 2015.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Absence defined

Absence is said to be **authorised** when the headteacher accepts the reason for absence. Generally, illness which prevents attendance or religious observance are the only acceptable reasons.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider to be reasonable and for which no 'leave' is given. The following are not acceptable reasons:

- Birthdays
- Shopping trips
- Working in a family business
- Keeping whole families off school when only one is ill
- Hair appointments
- Routine dental and doctor appointments

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIMES

Parents do not have the right to withdraw children from school for a family holiday. All holiday leave in term time is at the discretion of the Headteacher. The request must be made **two weeks in advance in writing**.

Parents may request up to *five* days in any one school year. The written application will be judged by the headteacher. This will not be accepted if a child has less than 95% attendance. Leave of absence will not be given for children taking a holiday at home.

Where more than 5 days are taken for holiday purposes, this will be marked as unauthorised in the register and parents will be informed. Any holiday time taken above 5 days will also be recorded as unauthorised and a Fixed Term Penalty Notice will be issued to the parent by the Local Authority.

Holidays will not be authorised for Year 6 pupils during the terms before or during SATs week.

Parents/Guardians have the right to appeal to a Governors' Attendance Panel if they feel a decision is unjust.

REWARDING GOOD ATTENDANCE

As a means of promoting high attendance, St Andrew's presents Headteacher Achievement Certificates to children in assembly, three times a year, at the end of Terms 2, 4 and 6 as follows:

Gold Certificate (100% attendance)

Silver Certificate (98% attendance)

Bronze Certificate (96% attendance)

Other certificates will also be issued to children whose attendance shows progressive improvement during the year.

RESOLVING ATTENDANCE ISSUES – HOW THE SCHOOL WILL DEAL WITH POOR ATTENDANCE

The following staged procedure will be used for resolving attendance issues.

Stage 1

All children whose attendance falls below 95% (the school's target) will receive a letter pointing out the current attendance rate. The attendance of these children will be monitored on a termly basis with the expectation that the attendance rate will improve.

Stage 2

For children with **6 or more** unauthorised absences
For children whose attendance **falls below 90%**

- Initial contact will be with the School Secretary.
- There will be an assessment of the situation
- Verbal / written identification of the problem.
- Advice will be offered to remedy the situation. This may be offered at a meeting if required by either party.
- A % attendance target set over the next three weeks
- A date will be set for a meeting to assess progress. (The Children Missing Education Officer and the School Nurse may attend these meetings if it is considered to be appropriate.)

Stage 3

- No further action will be taken if the target is met
- If Target is not met, another % target is set over next two weeks
- On-going work with the family as appropriate e.g. regular communication, school meetings, reviews etc.
- A Medical Action Plan (MAP) may be drawn up if this is considered to be appropriate.

Stage 4

If the situation is not improving

- More formal consultation with parents will be necessary
- Meeting with headteacher/school governor to discuss attendance problems
- A course of action will be agreed

Stage 5

When a child's attendance falls below 80% a formal referral will be made to the CMES (Children Missing Education Service)

If there is no improvement in the child's attendance, the CMES in consultation with the School and the Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO) may issue a Penalty Notice.

Stage 6

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will trigger the fast-track prosecution process under the provisions of section 444(1), of the 1996 Education Act and lead to a court appearance.

Definitions

Penalty Notices are fines, issued by B&NES CMES, for a child's unauthorised absence from school. The service will always consider legal action when there is no legitimate reason for absence.

The CMES will not take legal action if previously poor attendance is now improving. Instead they will monitor the case and support the child. If attendance does not improve, or if absences begin to increase the CMES will re-assess the case to see if legal action is needed.

MAP (Medical Action Plans)

Some children will have absences due to medical illness, some of which may require long term recovery. Parents will be invited in for a meeting with the school Nurse, CMEO (if applicable) and the headteacher to discuss any issues for which the school can offer support. Attendance targets will be put in place if this is felt to be appropriate.

CONSULTATION TIMETABLE

November 2014	School Improvement and Curriculum Committee
	Staff
March 2015	Full Governing Body
March 2017	To be reviewed

Adopted by Governors 24.03.2015

Signed by Chair of Governors *Date*.....