

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. AIMS

Poor attendance disadvantages children. We aim to ensure that the children in our school attend regularly and on time, and where this is not the case, staff follow a staged procedure designed to encourage consistent attendance.

The performance indicator by which we judge the success of our efforts is set each year by our average attendance figure. In the last academic year (94/95) our average attendance was %., we are seeking this year to improve this figure.

While 100% attendance is clearly the ideal, in many cases legitimate illness or other factors can prevent it. Such attendance is, where it occurs, is clearly "excellent". On the other hand, attendance, which falls below 90%, where a child is known to be in reasonable health and there are no other extenuating circumstances, is poor and should give cause for concern. In order to ascertain the levels of individual children's attendance, we aim to ensure that a complete register check is undertaken every week, and where there is cause for concern, appropriate action shall be taken.

We also aim to publish our overall average attendance, and our figures for unauthorised attendance by year group, in the Governors Annual Report to parents. In addition we are obliged to make our attendance figures known to legitimate agencies (e.g. the DFE and the Borough) by completing appropriate returns.

Finally, we aim to ensure that school registers, on which these returns depend are kept accurately, and that the criteria by which we judge absences as authorised or not are common and known to all class teachers.

2. REGISTERS

As a legal document, registers are kept on the premises at all times. Teachers are required to complete the register at the beginning of each session every day, and return it to the office at the end of each registration period. Any child after this time is late and should be sent to the office for this to be recorded. The time the child arrived, i.e. 9.25, should be entered in the margin.

Where there is an absence, teachers are required to enter the appropriate explanatory symbol in the absence circle (these symbols are found at the back of the register), and if necessary write an explanation in the margin. A sickness may only be authorised if the teacher has received a message from the office, or from a parent/guardian, older sibling or the child directly. Any notes received from parents should be kept in the back of the register in a large envelope. Notes will be destroyed after 1 week by the school secretary.

Teachers are asked to use their professional judgement in deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. Clearly, where there is a definite pattern of non-attendance or where the explanation for absence is unsatisfactory (e.g. going to the airport, buying shoes), absence may not be authorised even with a message from a parent. conversely, a teacher may authorise an absence without a message if he/she feels that the explanation given is genuine and that the child concerned has normally good attendance. In any event, teachers are asked to

actively seek an explanation for every absence and keep a note of the response. Finally, it is a requirement to keep weekly totals of possible and actual attendance, along with the number of authorised and unauthorised absences per week (in sessions). This information will be provided and kept by the school office staff.

3. PROCEDURES

Class teachers have initial responsibility for expecting good attendance and punctuality from the children in their care. Teachers are expected to find out and record absences, as outlined above. Where they are receiving no response from parents, teachers should talk to them personally. Should concerns persist, teachers should talk to the DHT or the Home School Worker, who is in school every Tuesday afternoon. The Home School Worker will write to the parents and make a home visit to help clarify the situations and make the school's position known. Occasional poor attendance will be monitored by the Headteacher.

The Home/School Worker will monitor the attendance/punctuality of children referred. If attendance remains poor, the matter will be discussed with the ESW, who visits the school fortnightly and liaises with both the DHT and the Home/School worker. The ESW may recommend more work "in house", the involvement with other agencies (e.g. school nurse), or a formal referral. If this happens, primary responsibility for the case concerned passes over to the ESWS, although of course the school is fully involved with consequent developments.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The class teacher is initially responsible for encouraging good attendance, seeking out reasons for absence, keeping the register correctly, and referring children for whom concerns exist.

The Home/School Worker has a responsibility to liaise with teachers and DHT, and when a referral has been made, shall decide in consultation with the DHT and teacher, a course of action. This may involve home visits and or writing letters home.

The DHT has oversight for whole school attendance. She is responsible for checking the registers, for communicating with parents where clear concerns exist, for liaising with the Home/School Worker and ESWS, for keeping the Headteacher briefed about attendance issues, for completing statistical returns for legitimate agencies as and when they are required, and for keeping records of concerns.

The school's ESW is responsible for dealing with statutory referrals.