

# Putnoe Primary School

## Attendance and Registration Policy

### Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Putnoe Primary fully recognises its responsibilities to work with parents and carers to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

### Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 96% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.

- Ensure that our policy applies to 4+ and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance. We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:
  - Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
  - Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
  - Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
  - Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
  - Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
  - Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
  - Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## 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 carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the DfE where requested.

## Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

### Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Office Staff/Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

### Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance and oversees the attendance role undertaken by the office staff.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Liaising with parents and professionals where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues

## Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information using the SIMS software. Printing daily registers from SIMS to use in Evacuation/Fire procedures.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher and/or EWS
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Making referrals to the EWS
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

## Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. Evidence from either the GP/dentist/hospital may be requested if a number of medical absences are recorded.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are usually **not** authorised
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## Registration

All the school doors open at 8.50 am until 9 am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00 am and by 1.25pm.

All attendance records are documented using SIMS software, or in the event of technical failure, recording present and absence marks on a printed sheet.

Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

## Attendance Codes

C	Other authorised circumstances
I	Illness
O	Unauthorised circumstances
F	Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
G	Unauthorised holiday
E	Excluded
L	Late
U	Late after 9.20am
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Education visit
B	Educated off site
H	Annual family holiday (agreed)
M	Medical/dental appointment
N	No explanation received (use for up to 7 days only)
R	Religious observance
T	Traveller absence
W	Work experience/educated at home

### Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 9am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.20am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 10am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

If children arrive late due to public transport delays, they can be given a present mark.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

## **Absences**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

## **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a text to parents/carers asking them to contact the school with a reason for absence. If there is no response, texts are followed up by letter and if there is still no reason for absence, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

## **Chronic medical conditions**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

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

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

## Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents. All parents receive information about attendance in their child's annual report and at Parent Consultation Evenings. Parents also receive regular updates from the Attendance Officer in the termly newsletter, keeping them informed of our whole school attendance figures and targets.

Very good attendance or much improved attendance is rewarded on a termly basis in the form of certificates for the children. Throughout each term, incentive stickers and charts are given to children to encourage better attendance and punctuality. These are issued on either a daily or weekly basis.

The Attendance Trophy is awarded on a weekly basis to the class with the highest attendance percentage and there is an Attendance Display in the hall illustrating this.

## Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

Family holidays are the second most common reason for absence after illness but it is not a 'right' to take a holiday in term time.

**In 2011-2012, nationally 1,153,770 pupils had one session of absence due to holiday.**

From 1/9/13 schools are unable to authorise any holiday in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

**A Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued to parents who take an unauthorised term time holiday of 5 days or more. This is £60 per parent if paid within 21 days and £120 per parent if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the fine is not paid, parents can be prosecuted.**

Fixed Penalty Notices can also be issued to parents of children who have had 5 days of unauthorised absence over a period of 10 weeks (1 day = 2 sessions).

## Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 96%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. If a child is offered a place at Putnoe Primary and has had poor attendance at their previous school, our Attendance Officer will meet with the parent/carer just prior to admission to discuss any attendance issues, offer support where appropriate and explain what our attendance expectations are. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. We rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via telephone calls or letters which are sent home.

There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the EWS.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to EWS from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The EWO visits once a month to check and monitor attendance. He/she carries out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%). The EWO works with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

### **Guidelines for Parents**

Please see our '**Attendance Policy for Parents**'.

We are absolutely committed to ensuring that attendance at school receives a high priority in the minds of children, parents, staff and governors.

Children who miss out on education are at an immediate disadvantage relative to their peers, at great cost to themselves and to the community as a whole. By working together, all those concerned to keep absence from school to the lowest possible figure can more effectively seek to ensure that as few children as possible experience more than the occasional difficulty. Taking such a task seriously is in everyone's interests.

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head Teacher.