

# Attendance

## The Bythams Primary School



**Reviewed and updated:**

May 2014

**Next review:**

September 2017

Signed: .....

Signed: .....

(Chair of Governors)

(Headteacher)

Date: .....

Date: .....

# Attendance

## Whole School Attendance Policy

The Bythams Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all its pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the school will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

Regular school attendance is a key government priority which supports the broader national aims of raising standards, narrowing attainment gaps and safeguarding children. Every child has a right to access appropriate educational provision.

Where a parent registers their child at a school, they have a legal responsibility (under section 7 of the Education Act 1996), to ensure that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities. The Local Authority has a duty to consider legal proceedings against parents where this responsibility is not fulfilled.

Lincolnshire Children's Services discharges its statutory obligations for the promotion and enforcement of school attendance through the role of the Education Welfare Officer. However, there is an expectation that the Local Authority, through their integrated teams, schools and parents will work in partnership to ensure the best level of pupil access, attendance and engagement in education.

We recognise as a school that:

- All pupils of a statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.

In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school, as required by law. This is linked to the school "Home School Agreement" issued to parents at the start of each Academic Year, where the school seeks the parent/guardians agreement to ensure "my child goes to school regularly, on time, properly dressed and properly equipped"

## **EXPECTATIONS**

From the Pupil

The school expects the following from its pupils:

- That they attend school regularly
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day
- That they will tell a member of office staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

### **From the Parent/Guardian**

The school expects the following from its parents:

- To ensure their child/children attend school regularly and punctually
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

### **From the school**

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing a good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us (confidential means that a member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the student or parent).

## **REGISTRATION**

For attendance purposes, the school day is divided into two sessions, a morning session and an afternoon session. Morning sessions commence at 08:45 and afternoon sessions 1:00.

The class teacher is responsible for taking registration to ensure each child is present and to identify those who are not. Morning registration closes at 09:15. Should a child arrive between 08:50 and 09:15 they will be marked as late, if arrival in school is after 09:15 the absence will be marked as unauthorised, this is in line with guidance from the Education Welfare Officer.

**CODING**

From 1 September 2006, all schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence. The schools attendance data, both manually and electronically is audited once per year by the Education Welfare Officer with any incorrect coding challenged.

The use of fixed codes supports the use of electronic systems to record attendance when it is uploaded by administrative staff and underpins the production of data necessary for absence returns to the Department of Education, without time consuming counting up of possible attendance and actual absences. The use of these fixed codes will also assist both Local Authorities and the Department of Education in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school.

Only the school, in the context of the law can authorise absence, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason, then the matter must be referred to the head teacher.

**PROCEDURE WHEN ABSENCE HAS BEEN HIGHLIGHTED BY THE CLASS TEACHER**

Where a child has been marked as absent and the school office have not been notified by the parent/guardian using the schools absence voicemail, the school will endeavour to contact the parent by sending an initial parentmail text to request the parent/guardian contact school to advise the reason for the absence. Should there be no response from the parent/guardian, this will be followed by a telephone call, again should the parent/guardian not be contactable by phone, the school will write to them.

If there has been no communication from the parents/guardians as to the reason for absence, if the school is concerned for the child's wellbeing, a meeting may be convened, with relevant staff, to discuss options for ensuring the safety of the child. One option may be to contact the police for further assistance in locating the child, as the school's paramount concern is for his/her welfare. If non-attendance continues the school will notify the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will liaise with the head teacher to discuss further action.

After 10 days, unless other action is planned, the parents will be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, parent and pupil and possibly EWO who will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school.

If there is no improvement, the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer, with a view to a formal referral being made to the Education Welfare Service (if one has not already been made at an earlier stage). If a referral had already been made then the case will be reviewed and further action planned.

## **SCHOOL ORGANISATION**

To ensure the attendance policy is successful, each member of staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

### **Specific responsibilities**

#### Head Teacher:

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging, but achievable targets for attendance with the governing body.
- To liaise regularly with the Education Welfare Officer when appropriate.
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To report to the governing body any attendance issues at the earliest opportunity.

#### Class Teacher

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To follow up immediately any unexplained absence with administrative staff to ensure parents have been contacted.
- To challenge any suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- To record all reasons for absence in the registers with the appropriate code.
- To inform the head teacher of concerns in a timely manner.

#### Governors

- To liaise with the head teacher to set challenging but achievable targets each academic year.
- To ensure regular review of attendance data with the head teacher to highlight any potential safeguarding issues.

### Parents

- Contact with school on the first day of absence.
- To keep the school informed of any continuing absence, daily (or give a specific time frame of absence ie: one week as directed by doctor).
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.
- Inform the school of any concerns their child may have that may be contributing to their non-attendance at school.

### Administrative Staff

- Produce regular reports from the pupil management system, highlighting any patterns in absence and report any persistent absence trends to the head teacher.
- Ensure correct codes are being used by class teachers/supply teachers and amending as necessary.
- Submittal of accurate attendance data via the school census.

### Other Agencies

The school will continue to develop strong partnerships with outside agencies that work with children and young people. The following agencies may be used where appropriate in individual cases of persistent absence:

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services
- Educational Psychologists
- Special Education Needs Service
- Social Care
- Connexions
- Youth Service
- Local Police.

## **DATA PROTECTION ACT**

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. The school recognises the importance to have full regard for the requirements of the Act.

The school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

## **AUTHORISED OR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence. All other absence must be regarded as unauthorised.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

## **FAMILY HOLIDAYS**

Amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration – England) Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This change came into force on 1 September 2013.

The Bythams Primary school is not currently fining parents who take their children on holiday during a term; however this policy will be reviewed annually.