

WORTHINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend school, and we put in place appropriate procedures for this to happen. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. Each term we present stickers or certificates to those children whose attendance is excellent. We also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body is responsible for ensuring the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. The school day begins at 8.55 a.m. and ends at 3.30 p.m.

Morning register is closed at 9.15 a.m., therefore, any child arriving after this time is marked late and noted by the office staff. If lateness persists then the school will notify parents of our concerns, and then if no improvements are made, school will contact our attached Educational Welfare Officer. In the unlikely event of no resolutions being reached the LEA may consider the use of a fixed penalty notice.

The register is also taken at the start of the afternoon session, and this closes at 1.25 p.m.

The register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised, and the reasons for absences are recorded each month.

2 Definitions

2.1 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 guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or 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. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

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

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1** When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office.
- 3.2** When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- 3.3** A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.4** If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1** We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a close family member's wedding. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will be granted.
- 4.2** Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their children from school for an annual holiday. We naturally prefer parents to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods, but if this is not possible the school will consider each case separately, applying the same rules for each family. If holidays are taken during term time due to any other reasons other than those supported by a letter from an employer stating that a parent must work during school holidays then this absence will not be authorised by the Head Teacher. We do ask that during SAT's week every year in May, parents and carers do not take a holiday and indeed do all in their power to avoid any absence.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1** When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. This is also the case from day one for any child serving a fixed-term exclusion.
- 5.2** If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to possibly be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1** The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If the child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LEA Educational Welfare Officer, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2** The governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action (fixed penalty notices) against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1** All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate/sticker for attendance. There are special certificates for any child who has 100 percent attendance for a whole year.

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1** The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1** It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Head Teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

- 9.2** The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for minimum period of three years.
- 9.3** The rates of attendance will be reported to governors in the termly headteachers report.
- 9.4** Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head Teacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.
- 9.5** This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.